

# HISTORY

# MATTERS

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PRESENTING THE HISTORY OF  
AFRICAN AND CARIBBEAN PEOPLE  
IN BRITAIN

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# **PART 1: EDITORIAL AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

# EDITORIAL

## Welcome to the Summer 2021 issue of the History Matters Journal.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the *Journal's* contents. Thanks must also be given to members of the Editorial Working Group, and to Marika Sherwood. We are always striving to improve and expand the *Journal*, step by step, but its success depends on your support.

If you have suggestions, or constructive criticisms, please send them to us. If you come across historic documents, as well as other interesting historical material, or you have begun working on a new area of research, please let us know so that this information can be shared via the *Journal*.

We are particularly interested in presenting shorter articles, as well as pictures, photos and other visual forms of information.

We had a very encouraging response to the call for papers to the 2nd New

Perspectives Conference, which will be held throughout October 2021.

We are excited to share a confirmed list of panellists with you in this issue (see Announcement).

As always, we are particularly interested in showcasing the work of young researchers. In connection, we must also make it clear that this is not a strictly academic Journal. The *History Matters Journal* intends to showcase an inclusive and accessible range of research work.

We are keen to hear from people who are conducting new and exciting research, whether within the academe, at a grassroots community level, or as a personal interest. So, if you are working on an aspect of history relating to African and Caribbean people in Britain, please do get in touch via: [hismatters@gmail.com](mailto:hismatters@gmail.com)

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## In memory of Menelik Shabazz (30 May 1954 – 28 June 2021)

The Summer 2021 issue of the *History Matters Journal* is dedicated to the memory of Menelik Shabazz (1954 - 2021), pioneer of Black British film and documentation, and committed Pan-Africanist.

Like so many people, the History Matters team were deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Shabazz in June. For anyone interested in the history of African and Caribbean people in Britain, and in particular the contemporary struggles waged by these communities against oppressive forces, Shabazz's films have been a staple for information and inspiration.

Born in Barbados, Shabazz arrived in England aged 5, and became involved in community activism in his teen years. He became one of the youngest members of the Black Liberation Front, a Pan-African and socialist organisation formed in North West London in 1971.

After studying the art of film making at North London College and London International Film School, Shabazz began utilising film as a medium for capturing the experiences and struggles facing Black people in Britain during the late 20th century.

During the 1970s and 1980s, it was not a common occurrence to see Black people represented in British film and on television. Shabazz's documentations filled a large void in this way. But his works also went that step further, of presenting authentic and relatable stories which spoke directly to the day-to-day experiences of young Black people, and the realities of British racism.



Shabazz during the production of  
*Step Forward Youth*

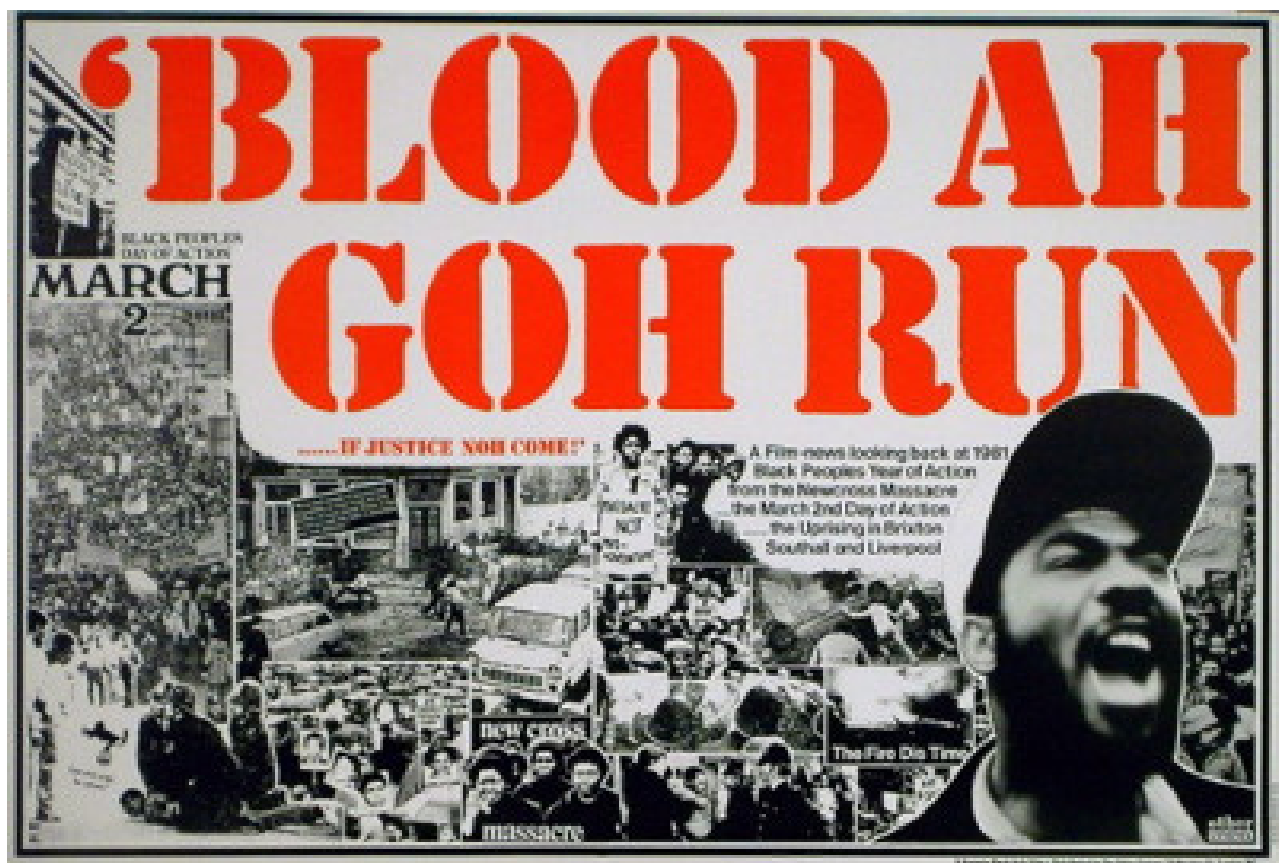
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In 1976, Shabazz directed *Step Forward Youth*, which centred on young Black people in London. The film for which he is perhaps best known for, *Burning an Illusion*, was released in 1981. It was groundbreaking for a number of reasons, one being that it centred around a young Black woman and her experiences with love. As well as being groundbreaking, the film was also historical, being the second feature film by a Black director, after Horace Ové's *Pressure*.

In February 1981, around 20,000 people marched from New Cross to

Hyde Park in London, in what became known as the 'Black People's Day of Action'. This demonstration was in reaction to the New Cross Massacre, in which 13 young Black people were killed in a fire largely believed to be the result of a racist arson attack. Shabazz captured the powerful march on camera, in his film *Blood Ah Go Run*, which remains one of the most important sources of the historic event.

Alongside his pioneering film projects, Shabazz was also passionate about encouraging the development of young and emerging Black filmmakers



*Blood Ah Go Run* poster

in Britain. He experienced first hand the difficulties that Black British filmmakers face in attempting to rally resources and support from within the British film industry. As his website states that after his withdrawal from filmmaking: 'Menelik then channelled his energies into publishing Black Filmmaker (bfm) magazine to assist the next generation of filmmakers. The publication was the first of its kind and was distributed in UK nationally, as well as to readers in Europe and North America. The publication lasted nine years'.

There is no doubt that Menelik Shabazz's legacy as a filmmaker and activist will continue to inspire many generations to come.



*Black Filmmaker Magazine cover*

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## 2nd New Perspectives on the History of African and Caribbean people in Britain Conference

History Matters are excited to announce the confirmed list of panellists who will be presenting during the 2nd New Perspectives Conference, taking place throughout Thursday 7th, Friday 8th and Saturday 9th October 2021 via virtual webinar.

We thank everyone who took the time to submit abstracts. While we regret that not all could be accepted, we were inspired by the amount of groundbreaking work currently being conducted on the history of African and Caribbean people in Britain. Below are the themes of the conference panels, names of confirmed speakers and their paper titles.

### Early Modern Black Presence:

#### **Annabelle Gilmore:**

'Where are Warwickshire's Black People? An examination of the Black Presence in Warwickshire into the Long Eighteenth Century'

#### **Kate Bernstock:**

'Conducting a regional Black history of Falmouth and Penryn during the packet boat years of 1688-1850'

#### **Montaz Marche:**

'"A Diamond in the Dirt": The Experiences of Ann Sancho in Eighteenth Century London'

### Gender, Activism and Memory:

#### **A.S. Francis:**

'A history of Manchester's network of Black radical women during the 1960s-1980s'

#### **Aleema Gray:**

'Rastafari Women Speak: Resistance, Self-Reliance and Unity in Babylon'

#### **Theo Williams:**

'Race, Gender and Pan-Africanism in Britain, c. 1935-1945'

#### **Desmond Felix:**

'Three Lions in the Ring: Benn, Eubank, Watson: Managing social identities in British'

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## **Organisation, Politics and Resistance:**

### **Kesewa John:**

'Self-Determination, Freedom and 'Colonial Transfers': Black Agency and the Aftermath of the 1919 Versailles Conference'

### **Rochelle L Malcolm:**

'Building Home: Race, Housing and Black Resistance 1970 – 2000'

### **Perry Blankson:**

'The 'Black Power Desk' - State Surveillance of the British Black Power Movement'

### **Christian Høgsbjerg:**

'Comrade Algerine Sankoh of West Africa' - Britain's first black revolutionary socialist?'

## **Community dynamics and Power:**

### **Olivia Wyatt:**

'"The enemy in our midst": 'Community' as an organising principle for African-Caribbean settled migrants in Leeds, 1971-81'

### **Claudia Tomlinson:**

'Fitting in or Getting Ahead: West Indian Students and the West Indian Migrant Community in Britain, 1955 – 1970'

### **Ellie Kramer-Taylor:**

'British and Caribbean Black Power: establishing connections, 1968-1970'

### **Sue Lemos:**

'Queering Black Politics: The Black Lesbian and Gay Centre (Project) in London, 1980s-1990s'

## **Politics, Archives and Publication:**

### **Naomi Oppenheim:**

'Black publishing in Britain: a longer story'

### **Rey Bowen:**

'The African Times and Orient Review and the British Government'

### **Rebecca Adams:**

'Black Caribbean womanhood within the archives: Mollie Hunte and working with her archives as a Black, female Archivist'

### **Tony Soares, Ansel Wong and Zainab Abbas:**

'Black Footprints – a Trio of Experiences'

Please stay tuned for more information on the timings for each panel, and information on how to book your tickets to attend the 2nd New Perspectives Conference.

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# **PART 2: ARTICLES AND DOCUMENTS**



# THE 2021 SEWELL REPORT: A VINDICATION OF THE YOUNG HISTORIANS PROJECT

BY PERRY BLANKSON

On the 31st of March 2021, the British government's Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities, commissioned by Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson, concluded that there is 'no evidence of institutional racism' in Britain. One might wonder what monumental structural and societal upheaval has taken place since the publication of the Macpherson Report in 1999, the Race Disparity Audit in 2017, or perhaps most recently, the Windrush Report, published in July 2018. All of these investigations illustrated the pervasive nature of institutional racism in Britain. In fact, including these aforementioned audits, reports and reviews, there have been six independent reports in the past four years, each meticulously outlining the existence of institutional racism within Britain.

So, has Britain 'solved racism'? Anyone familiar with the work of the Young Historians Project will know

that the work we do in highlighting the inadequacies of the British education system and curriculum demonstrates that the answer is a resounding 'no'. One passage from the report was particularly egregious:

*"We want to see how Britishness influenced the Commonwealth and local communities, and how the Commonwealth and local communities influenced what we now know as modern Britain. One great example would be a dictionary or lexicon of well known British words which are Indian in origin. There is a new story about the Caribbean experience which speaks to the slave period not only being about profit and suffering but how culturally African people transformed themselves into a re-modelled African/Britain"*

Reframing the wholesale brutality, plunder and genocide perpetrated by the British Empire during colonisation and the transatlantic slave trade as a positive moment of

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cultural reinvention is grotesque, but this erasure is nothing new when we look at how the story of Britain's relationship with race and Empire is approached in the curriculum. I can only think back to my school experience of Black History Month, where for thirty days we acknowledged the contribution of a handful of exceptional black individuals to Britain. The customary hagiographies of Mary Seacole and Olaudah Equiano were supplemented by fables of Martin Luther King and the 'peaceful' Civil Rights Movement in the 1960s. But what was happening in Britain at the same time?

We were taught about the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1956, while the Bristol Bus Boycott of 1963 was ignored. We knew about Jim Crow and racial segregation in America, but not about Britain's Colour Bar, which saw Black and Asian people in Britain barred from bars, pubs, and restaurants, refused housing by landlords and prohibited from jobs in certain industries, such as British railways. The Colour Bar was legal until 1965, just one year after the American Civil Rights Act abolished discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin. The work done by YHP has been invaluable in helping to uncover the hidden histories of African and

## BRISTOL'S NEW CITIZENS



A friendly and polite — that's the verdict on London's coloured busmen.

## The Full Facts On A Controversial Issue

Why are there no coloured men working on Bristol's buses? If you take a bus ride in London, Oxford, Birmingham or West Bromwich the chances are the conductor comes from Jamaica or Barbados—you may even find the driver does too. But in Bristol there are no such opportunities for the new citizens. Evening Post reporter Malcolm Smith tells you why in this full inquiry.

# NO COLOUR BAR ON OUR BUSES

**—but no jobs  
either for the  
immigrants**

The coloured bus conductor is a cheerful and willing character you will find collecting fares in many a British city. But not in Bristol.

He is a fellow most any Londoner or Midlander will give a good name for efficiency and politeness. On Bristol buses he is never given a chance.

There is a flat refusal by the under-manned Bristol Omnibus Company to employ coloured people in their crews, however high their skill.

The company's reason is based on a belief that:

- Among white workers there is a strong prejudice against the coloured at this level of the industry.
- That whites believe coloured workers lower the "tone" of the job.
- And that recruitment of whites falls off so that manpower shortage is never solved.

It has been said by some that bus crews are afraid that full employment cuts overtime.

It has been alleged that in Bristol there is a colour bar among local members of the Transport and General Workers' Union.



\* In many provincial cities, coloured workers share the same opportunities.

Evening Post, Wednesday 1st November 1963

Caribbean people in Britain. Our 2017 project on the Black Liberation Front (BLF) culminated in the production of a documentary featuring several former members of the BLF and an exhibition, which was used to educate students in our partner schools. Since then, work has been ongoing in producing another project, this time examining the historical contributions of African women to British healthcare, both before and after the establishment of the NHS.



The ‘historical illiteracy’, (in the words of David Olusoga) of the Sewell report serves as vindication of the hard work done by YHP to provide accessible tools for historical education to the public.

The Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities seeks to advance the narrative that institutional racism is something that happened ‘over there’, and if it did happen here, it has long been defeated by a liberal, tolerant Britain. It is only without the knowledge of Britain’s racist history, coupled with distortions of its present, that the idea of Britain as a ‘tolerant’, accepting nation free from institutional racism seems credible.

With the establishment of this narrative, anyone arguing for the contrary can be deemed to be ‘divisive’ or ‘uppity.’ In the words of YHP’s Florence Adeoye, ‘the UK has been built on a foundation of consistent erasure that makes it look like a generous and superior caregiver to the ungrateful and unruly.’ Such erasure is made all too clear with the recent death of His Majesty Prince Philip, whose notorious and unapologetic racism and bigotry has been repackaged by the media as endearing ‘gaffes’ to be looked upon with wry smiles and a wistful shaking of heads.

The 2021 Commission is a cynical, transparent piece of state propaganda, and it has been picked apart and thoroughly discredited by several experts, public figures and advocacy groups. Notwithstanding, it is useful in the lessons it can provide us. Tony Sewell and Boris Johnson’s Commission should be a clear example that individualistic campaigning for ‘black faces in high places’ can never be the strategy for dismantling the racist structures and institutions that govern daily life in Britain.

At best, this can help uplift a slim minority of exceptional individuals against the odds, and at worst, these exceptional individuals can be used as a cudgel to bash the majority of working class black and brown people who experience the realities of institutional racism.

The oppressive structures that perpetuate social inequalities can only be challenged through collective organising and direct action, such as the inspiring successful demonstration of young students at Pimlico Academy, who refused to attend classes in protest against school policy banning Afro hair and colourful hijabs.

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Fundamentally, the Commission teaches us that the work YHP does to uncover, acknowledge and teach the hidden histories of Empire and Britain's relationship with racism is central to confronting the fabricated narrative of Britain as a post-racial society.

Perry Blankson is currently studying MA Modern History at the University of Leeds and has a historical interest in the 'radical' Black British anti-imperialist and 'British Black Power' movements of the post-war period and beyond, with a particular historical focus in the response of the state to such organising. Blankson is also a member of the Young Historians Project, a non-profit organisation formed of young people of African and Caribbean descent.

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# BUILDING BLACK HISTORY INTO THE CURRICULUM: HISTORICAL VIDEOS FOR SCHOOLS AND MUSEUMS

BY ANGELA PLATT AND MATTHEW SMITH

Exploring the history of liberty, protest, rebellion, and reform, from Magna Carta to the Suffragettes and beyond, Royal Holloway's Citizens project has been producing educational videos for schools and museums for over four years. Launched with the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the project's YouTube channel, History Hub, has had over 2m views and has been very well received by teachers, with its videos being used in over 60 schools across the UK. Foregrounding missing or marginalized histories and voices has always been a driving mission of the project and so the Citizens team are pleased to be working with the Cowper & Newton Museum and the National Caribbean Heritage Museum to develop a series of videos examining the slave trade and the diversity of the abolitionist movement.

## **The Slave Trade and the Cowper & Newton Museum**

The Cowper & Newton Museum, which commemorates the lives and works of the celebrated 18th century poet William Cowper and slave trader, turned man of faith and abolitionist the Reverend John Newton, has been working with Citizens project to provide its visitors with new ways to learn about the slave trade and Cowper and Newton's role in the abolitionist movement. Cowper used his poetry to win hearts and minds over to the abolitionist cause, while Newton used his firsthand knowledge of the slave trade to raise awareness of its' horrors. Newton, of course, is also the author of the celebrated hymn 'Amazing Grace'.

Our project aims to move beyond

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Newton's renowned evangelical and abolitionist accolades and raise awareness of his participation as a promulgator of the slave trade itself. In these videos we have used Newton's journals and publications for insight into his involvement with the slave trade from 1745, and subsequently his role as a Captain of a slave ship from 1748. Whilst he left the slave trade and became a celebrated abolitionist, it is essential not to forget the contribution he first made to this dreadful part of British history. In the course of this project, we have developed three videos which draw upon Newton's work whilst also incorporating voices who experienced enslavement, such as Olaudah Equiano and Mary Prince. As noted by stakeholders at the Museum 'The partnership with experienced historians at Royal Holloway has given us the tools to tell this story much more widely and provided the resources to do it.' Happily, this project has benefited from the astute insight of academics, Museum stakeholders, and members of the Afro-Caribbean community.

Our first video, 'What was the Transatlantic Slave Trade?' introduces the trade and outlines John Newton's involvement. We follow Newton through his writings, contrasting his comments with those of the enslaved Olaudah Equiano.

Our second video, 'Who profited from the Slave Trade?', explores how the slave trade impacted on various parts of the economy, developing a powerful political lobby dedicated to its preservation. We ask, as did Mary Prince in the early nineteenth century: 'how English people can go out into the West Indies and act in such a beastly manner?' Exploring primary sources of the era, we identify the economic motivations and interests which drove and sustained the trade. In our third video, 'Who were the abolitionists?', we aim to draw attention to the diversity of the abolitionist movement, looking beyond the familiar white, middle class, evangelicals. Pivotal groups who advanced abolition's cause include, firstly, the black communities themselves. Prince and Equiano provided accounts of the reality and human cost of slavery that were key to appealing to the consciences of the British public. Activism undertaken by black individuals and their communities in Britain and the West Indies further contributed to the end of this trade through acts of subversion and resistance. Another pivotal group in the abolitionist campaign was women, who mobilized public sentiment against the trade through raising funds, publications, and boycotts, and the working class, who signed petitions in

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the thousands.

With these three videos, we hope that viewers will have a sense of both the harrowing reality of the slave trade for those who experienced enslavement, drawn from firsthand accounts, and an appreciation of the role of Black communities and individuals themselves in resisting and ending the trade.

### **Exploring Black British History**

Through our discussions with Afro-Caribbean communities, we also noted the need to produce more resources for schools that highlight the contribution of Black individuals to both the abolitionist movement and the broader struggle for rights and representation. Working with up-and-coming historian Montaz Marché, we are also working on video examining the life of Mary Prince – the first black woman in Britain to produce an autobiography. Her story details the personal horrors of slavery in the British Atlantic world. Drawing upon excerpts from this narrative, we have shared a glimpse into the life of this remarkable woman who repeatedly subverted enslavement by earning her own money when her ‘masters’ were absent, marrying a free black man in spite of their wishes, and claiming her freedom upon her

arrival in Britain in 1828. Hers is an inspiring example of the strength and ingenuity of a black woman despite suffering enslavement.

We have also produced a range of video resources in which actors have helped us bring to life inspirational words from Black radicals, including an excerpt from Ottobah Cugoano’s ‘Thoughts and Sentiments’ on the Slave Trade; stirring speeches by the Chartist leader William Cuffay and London’s first Black Mayor, John Archer; George Padmore’s critique of British Imperialism; and Henry Yorke’s Sheffield speech in which the young radical, inspired by the French Revolution, called on Britons to rally around the standard of liberty.

If you have recommendations for other stories and voices we should include in future videos please do get in touch by emailing [citizens@rhul.ac.uk](mailto:citizens@rhul.ac.uk).

### **Project Reflections**

As a historical researcher with a vested interest in public history and enthusiasm for learning new technical skills, the opportunity to work with The Citizens Project has been a huge privilege. I am one of the interns with Citizens, and have been involved in numerous film projects, including: The Slave Trade, Female

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Chartism, Dissent and the Labour Movement, Mary Prince, The Gordon Riots, and The Enlightenment. My involvement in this project has given me the opportunity to hone a variety of skills, as noted, and to engage with some really interesting and crucial questions pertaining to history and citizenship. Working with this project has given me the opportunity to ruminate upon pertinent questions from history which might not have naturally arisen in the course of my research and consider how I might address them in other avenues. Studying history, and producing these historical films, has cultivated my understanding and awareness of the experience of diverse groups. Looking at the experience of these groups in history, of course, gives some sense of what happened before – but it also offers insight into what is still happening today. This, probably, has been the most lucrative aspect of studying history in any fashion – though, especially, by working with Citizens.

*Angela Platt, Citizens Project Intern & PhD Researcher in History of Religion, Gender & Emotions.*

My first experience of black British history within a school setting was ... transformative. The class lacked the depth, empathy and understanding of how Britain's past has molded its present. After this lesson, a curiosity was stoked within me. How are we, but especially children, taught about

black history? It interested me so much so that nine years later, I would write a dissertation on the topic. Shortly after graduating university, I was informed about the opportunity of being involved of the Citizen's Project. I jumped at the chance. I thoroughly enjoyed being part of a collaborative team that strove for sensitivity and inclusivity within their content. I've learnt so much about both the range of abolitionists and activism tactics used to bring about change, and the (overwhelmingly avaricious) mindsets used to justify the four-hundred years of enslavement. Being part of this project has helped me to draw parallels between the past and present. If these videos can help children do the same, I'd be honored to have made a contribution.

*Ashlee McIntosh, Citizens Project Presenter*

Angela Platt is a Citizens Project Intern & PhD Researcher in the History of Religion, Gender & Emotions.

Dr Matthew Smith is a Senior Lecturer in Public Humanities and Director of External Engagement for the School of Humanities, at Royal Holloway, University of London

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# THE ART OF NARRATION: MEMORY, VOICES AND ARCHIVAL DEADENING IN THE RECONSTRUCTION OF BLACK BRITISH HISTORY

BY OLIVIA WYATT

As Whiteness is typically imagined as the benchmark for Britishness, emerging narratives that challenge this assumption are often dismissed as sinister attacks on Britishness itself, fuelling the idea that Black Britishness is an “oxymoron.” Narratives of Black British history have therefore been silenced and forgotten to bolster a national story about progressiveness and equality.

In her talk on ‘The [Post]colonial Entanglements of Windrush and Blackness’, Jade Bentil explained that the few narratives that are acknowledged within national memory are (re)constructed to adhere to the ‘British’ values of respectability. The photographs of African-Caribbean women in white elegant dresses and men in smart suits departing the HMT Empire Windrush were used to advance this

story. These respectable migrants came to “embark on a new life”, and ‘marked’ the arrival of the Black presence in Britain. Historians like Hakim Adi and Folarin Shyllon have dispelled this myth, but recently scholars like Bentil and Kennetta Hammond Perry have begun to interrogate the image itself. In her talk on The Future of Black British studies, Perry argued that the story of a Nigerian criminalised stowaway disrupts this narrative. This is a particularly salient point, given that oppression, imposed criminality and other forms of anti-Blackness frequently featured in the experiences of post-war immigrants and their descendants: realities that contradict the story of respectability and tolerance promoted by the Windrush narrative. Many institutional archives reflect this anti-Blackness as they often capture the

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lives of Black Britons through the skewed lens of the state's interactions with them.

This dilemma led Perry to posit: "what is possible with conventional archival spaces that are often scenes of violence and the deadening of Black life in Britain?" In this essay, I combine Perry's ideas about the continual death of Black subjects within archival spaces with Bentil's reflections on the power of memory to demonstrate that the incorporation of oral histories into the processes of knowledge production can elevate silenced voices - an elevation that is integral to a reparative writing of marginalised histories.

Within the context of Caribbean slavery, Marisa Fuentes and Brian Connolly argue that "silence is also an action: it is the silencing of enslaved voices and the power that these voices could have had to challenge a slave owner's persistent and violent representations of black and enslaved people." By conceptualising this silence as an action that is knowingly taken by those with assigned authority, we can visualise the active role that power plays in the survival of specific

perspectives. Bentil and Perry alluded to the power behind those who created our historical sources: the reporters who recorded certain details and overlooked others at the docks, the coroner who noted that David Oluwale was "found drowned" despite the violence that he had been subjected to by the police over an eighteen-month period. Indeed, the creation of the sources is the first of four crucial moments in which silences permeate the narrative, as theorised by Michel-Rolph Trouillot.



David Oluwale

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Perry went on to explain that the prominence of state-authored sources in the archive of David Oluwale forces us to view him through the same lens of criminality that the state viewed him through. His story can therefore be viewed as a case study of racialised state violence in Britain because this violence - which is also evident in the denial of Oluwale's humanity - is endemic to these sources about him.

However, I am still saddened by the prospect that Oluwale's perspective appears to be lost forever, like the enslaved voices who were silenced by their masters' control of their own archival portrayal. It seems as though

Oluwale is destined to die again and again, as archivists and researchers continuously revise the ways in which they present his story for him. I believe this is the deadening that Perry referred to: the metaphorical death that many Black British archival subjects undergo as they are silenced, dehumanised and invisibilized by the ways in which people and sources portray them.

During the talk, Perry connected her research into David Oluwale to that of the innovative work she oversees at the Stephen Lawrence Research Centre (SLRC).

She argued that popular discussions often focus on Stephen Lawrence as a legal case instead of as a human being. In this sense, both Oluwale and Lawrence are further dehumanised by the ways in which they are remembered. To only remember the deathly moments that ultimately robbed them of their humanity is to overlook their lives and how they saw themselves. We remember them for what their murders and the subsequent legal proceedings represented, not for who they were.

What separates Oluwale from Lawrence, however, is that it is easier to reaffirm Lawrence's humanity. Perry explained that the SLRC began as an archive of the papers of Doreen Lawrence, and these materials help us to visualise Lawrence as the intelligent athletic teenager that he was. Whereas the true identity of Oluwale - who had been a stowaway, unemployed, homeless, ex-asylum and prison inmate - is more difficult to find.

This is why Perry emphasised that it was "radical" of Lawrence's mother to open the centre as an archive; in doing so, she introduced an archive that was instantly associated with life and new beginnings. Such an

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endeavour combats the narratives that centralise the brutality of Lawrence's death and his inability to get justice, as well as the idea that the conventional archive must always be a site of the deadening of Black life. This centre began with the processes of knowledge production intimately entwined with those of knowledge preservation, which helps us counter the damaging narratives in other archives and write reparatory accounts of Black British history.

Oluwale's truth is one of the stories that must be forgotten in order for

the national story to persist - a subject that Bentil explored as she discussed the ways in which stories about 'the nation' had erased certain narratives of Black British history from our national memory.

Bentil explained that the famous images of the joyous Windrush arrivals help construct the story that Britons are supposed to remember: "In the vast romance of empire, this ship marks the dawn of a new day, the triumph of liberal democracy, and the destiny of a nation." Through a masterful combination of



Caribbean immigrants arriving in Southampton in 1962.

historical fact, narration and critical fabulation, Bentil disrupted and undermined this romantic story. Not only did she recount the radical and colourful lives of Black Britons who had lived in Britain long before 1948, she also referred to the lynchings, forced sterilisation procedures and experiences of police brutality that are not captured in the Windrush narrative or the images that anchor it. While these realities are increasingly acknowledged within the public sphere, we are yet to see if the national memory will finally accept these truths about Black Britons and their experiences within the British empire.

In a similar fashion to Perry, Bentil argued that the concept of a stowaway onboard Empire Windrush disrupted the national story that these migrants came to serve Britain and enjoy a life of equal opportunity. She used critical fabulation to theorise about the experiences of this stowaway: "The woman that must be forgotten so that history could proceed." Therefore not only is Black history sidelined within the national story of Britain, but the few stories that do permeate national memory are often unrepresentative of the Black British experience. If our

national memory is skewed, and the deadening of Black life is rampant within conventional archives, then how can we write truth and vitality back into Black British history? One of Bentil's sentences about the stowaway on Empire Windrush lingers on my mind: "The official story will not, cannot, must not, hold her truth, but she is the truth of the world."

What is it about *her* truth that becomes *the* truth? The mere existence of her truth contradicts the official story and exposes the real truth: stories of 'the nation' rely on myths and fiction. Her truth highlights the ways in which the production of knowledge is shaped by our perspectives; it is about what we choose to remember and misremember, what we cite and overlook, which subsequently creates archival and narrational silences.

If we accept this as the truth about the historical discipline then we can take *meaningful* steps to decolonise our practice by returning power to the marginalised voices - like those of Oluwale and the misnamed stowaway - whose truths have been forgotten.

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Oral history interviews can bring these voices to national attention because they provide historical actors with the opportunity to tell their truths. This is obviously impossible for the deceased, like Oluwale, but the permanent loss of Oluwale's personal truth should serve as a warning to researchers who avoid directly engaging with the people they write about. Nonetheless, we can still use oral history to restore humanity to those deceased subjects who were robbed of theirs.

For example, at the annual Race and Resistance lecture that Perry gave in 2019, a member of the audience said her father knew Oluwale and often recalled their times together. By incorporating these memories about Oluwale's personality into the narrative, we can animate his story in a way that combats the dehumanising portrayals found in his archive. Prominent historians like Eric Hobsbawm have dismissed the utility of oral history because they argue that memory is not a reliable method of knowledge production. Oral historians like Trevor Lummis and Paul Thompson have endeavoured to prove that long-term memory actually improves over time, depending on what is being

remembered. However, these attempts to prove the reliability of oral history are futile if they fail to illuminate the unreliability of 'traditional' historical methods. Unreliability becomes an illegitimate reason to dismiss the potential of oral history when we remember that the reliability of archival and 'official' sources is tainted by the state's dealings with marginalised groups. By enabling minoritised peoples to also have their truths heard, we accept and address this fact of the archive.

Alongside the creation of new decolonial archival spaces like the SLRC, oral histories can breathe life into still letters on a page or animate images frozen in time. Most importantly, oral histories allow historical actors to assert their being by telling their own story, which challenges the archival deadening that Perry alluded to. They enable the subject to have a more active role in the processes of knowledge production - they are no longer simply a subject. Therefore, in a society where Black people constitute less than 0.5% of academic historians, the institutionalisation of oral history practices within departments is one method of making the academy

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more inclusive. However, historians must be wary of referring to these interviews as autobiographies, regardless of the extent to which the interviewee shapes the trajectory of the interview. To not be wary is to overlook the power dynamics that inevitably exist within a space where we ask people to be vulnerable and share intimate stories. The questions we select - which are sometimes leading and can reproduce our own biases - can determine what knowledge emerges from the interview before it begins. Margot Badran reminds us that an interviewer having an agenda does not necessarily diminish the authorial voice of the interviewee; however, this argument discounts the impact of the interviewer's mere existence within that space, as well as their positionality and the nature of their relationship with the interviewee. These factors can influence the subject's (often subconscious) decision to be less assertive or candid than they would be if alone.

By being unaware of these power imbalances that can define interview spaces, we become less attuned to the ways in which these interviews also

produce silences. As historians supported by the institutions that were historically involved in the marginalisation of the communities that these figures belong to, our unawareness can also make us less mindful of the violence that we can subject the interviewee to.

By understanding these power dynamics and the ways in which silences are created, we decolonise our practice through the acceptance that there is no objective truth, despite what the official narrative wants us to believe. And in contemplating Bentil's words about the stowaway, we realise that the non-existence of a real, single historical truth is the actual "truth of the world." Therefore, our role as historians of Black British history is to ensure that we represent the truths of Black people that are underrepresented in the archive and in national memory, especially when these truths appear to contradict each other as well as the established narrative. Such tensions within narratives represent the complexity of human life that we must strive to capture in our writings. We must include the Black Tudors and the lesser-known eighteenth-century Black Britons, as well as the

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Windrush passengers. We should include the violence and dehumanisation that Black people as citizens and as historical subjects are subjected to, but we must also capture the vitality of their lives and of the new cultures that they created in Britain, which oral history practice can help with. If we are to do justice to this history, these are the steps we must take to combat the erasure and archival deadening of Black life that Bentil and Perry spoke of.

Olivia Wyatt is an MA student in Race and Resistance at the University of Leeds. Her current research concentrates on African-Caribbean women's community activism in Chapeltown, and her upcoming PhD project will focus on the significance of complexions among Black British activists. Alongside this, Wyatt is also a member of the Young Historians Project.

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## Further reading:

### Tweets:

African Views (@ViewsAfrican, 29 October 2017) '[Black British is an oxymoron](#)'  
Titus Groan (@titusgron, 12 September 2018) '[Black British Business, sounds like an oxymoron](#)'

### Conferences:

Jade Bentil, 'The [Post]colonial Entanglements of Windrush and Blackness,' Stephen Lawrence Research Centre, 10 February 2020  
Kennetta Hammond Perry, 'The Archive of Black Life and the Architecture of State Power: The Case of David Oluwale,' University of York, 13 March 2019, 'The Future of Black British studies,' University of Oxford, 22 October 2020

### Literature:

Hakim Adi, *Black British History: New perspectives* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2019) -- *West Africans in Britain, 1900-1960* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1998) , Margot Badran, 'Theorizing Oral History as Autobiography: A Look at the Narrative of a Woman Revolutionary in Egypt,' *Journal of Women's History*, 25 (2013), 161-170  
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Saidiya Hartman, 'Venus in Two Acts,' *Small Axe*, 12 (2008), 1-14  
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R. Kenneth Kirby, 'Phenomenology and the Problems of Oral History,' *The Oral History Review*, 35 (2008), 22-38  
Trevor Lummis, *Listening to History: the Authenticity of Oral Evidence* (London: Hutchinson, 1987)  
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# FOOTBALL AND SOCIAL ACCEPTABILITY IN VICTORIAN BRITAIN: THE CONTRASTING FORTUNES OF ANDREW WATSON AND ARTHUR WHARTON

BY TONY TALBURT

The aim of this paper is to examine the contrasting fortunes of two Black British footballers during the Victorian period. Andrew Watson and Arthur Wharton were Britain's first two Black footballers to achieve tremendous accomplishments in this sport.

Whilst both footballers achieved considerable success on the field, they experienced contrasting fortunes, respect and acceptability by the social sporting elite in Britain during the Victorian era. This paper, therefore, examines some of the factors which contributed to the contrasting fortunes of these two pioneering Black footballers, despite the fact that they both played the game at the very highest levels, and also made significant contributions during these formative years of the modern game of football.

Today, the modern world of football would seem very strange without the presence of Black players. In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, the presence of Black players was a strange and rare occurrence in Britain. Even more remarkable, is the fact that both Andrew Watson and Arthur Wharton, from Guyana and Ghana respectively, made significant contributions to the development of football in Britain. This study examines the significance of their football achievements in Britain during the Victorian era when racial discrimination, colonialism, and the general disdain towards the 'other' were at all-time highs. More specifically, the paper examines the contrasting fortunes of two Black British footballers who both achieved considerable success on the field but contrasting fortunes, respect and acceptability by the social sporting elite in Britain during the Victorian era.

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Despite the significant involvements of Andrew Watson and Arthur Wharton in the sport of football during the critical period of the 1870s-1890s, when the game was developing in Britain, very little attention or recognition has been afforded to them in respect to the development and modernisation of the game as we know it today. Furthermore, where they have been discussed in academic studies, the tendency has been to focus on either one player or the other, though both men actually lived and played during the last quarter of the nineteenth century in Britain. It is a travesty and an injustice, that, although both footballers were not only able to play the game at the very highest levels during their careers, with great distinction, their names are not often mentioned among the lists of football greats and pioneers in Britain. For example, Andrew Watson, who, amongst other remarkable football achievements, captained the Scottish national team in 1881 to a 6-1 win over England (still the heaviest defeat England has ever suffered on home soil) as discussed below, is rarely mentioned as an early pioneer of the game. As for Arthur Wharton, he was the world's first Black professional player, as well as the world's first Black player-manager. These achievements in themselves,

certainly deserve to be acknowledged as remarkable accomplishments.

### **The Whitewashing of Watson and Wharton From our National Consciousness**

With two such prolific and fairly popular Black footballers playing significant roles in the sport during the Victorian period, one would have expected to see more recognition or acknowledgment of their achievements and significance. Many sports historians, however, have not traditionally recognised or acknowledged these two footballers, either collectively or individually. For example, Lowndes discusses some of the great football players of the English game. Players such as: Steve Bloomer of Derby, Billy Meredith of Manchester City and Peter Doherty of Blackpool and then Manchester City were mentioned.

Similarly, in Golesworthy's work, under the heading of 'coloured players,' he notes that Eddie Parris, who played for Bradford, Luton Town, Northampton Town, Bournemouth and Boscombe Athletic between 1928-1939, was the only 'coloured' person to have played in an international championship. Another Black player named Jack Leslie has also been acknowledged, especially because he made three hundred and eighty-two appearances for Plymouth Argyle in the 1920s. More generally,

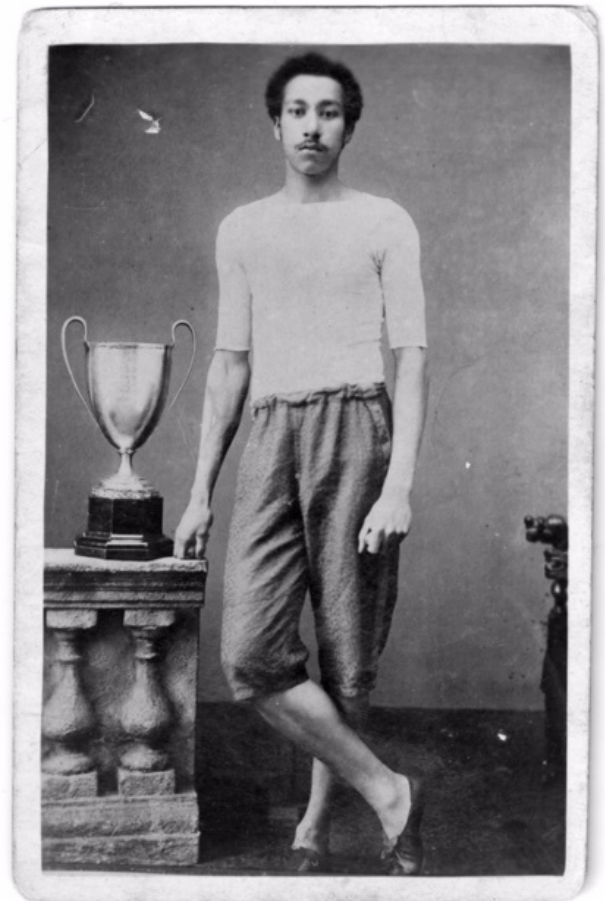
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however, Black football pioneers have not been a subject of great significance in most of the mainstream discussions on the development of football in Britain. Tim Hill's *Encyclopaedia of World Football* has a chapter devoted to the 'legends of football' to which the name Andrew Watson, despite his numerous achievements and contributions to the game, does not appear.

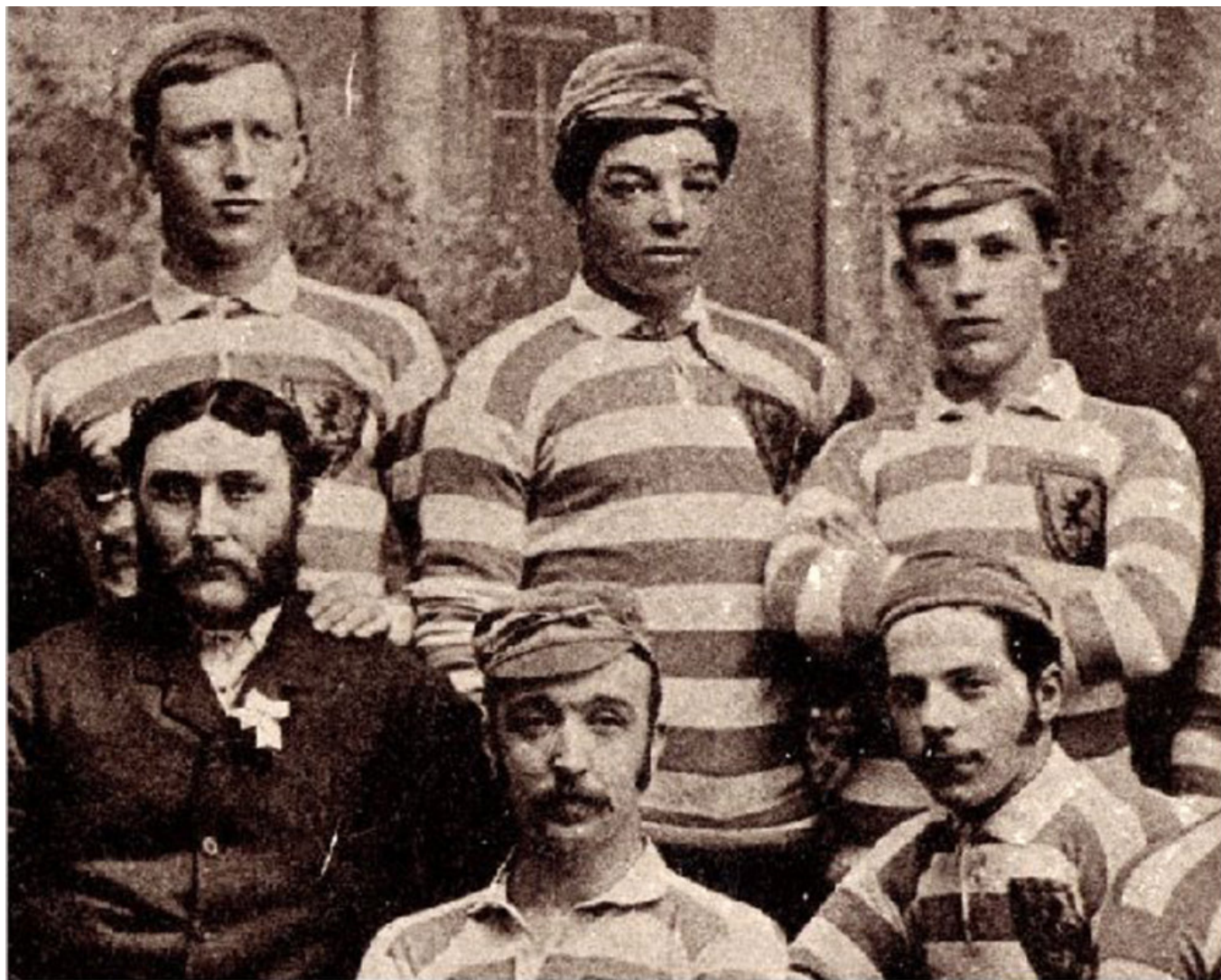
In some of the earliest studies on Black footballers in Britain, the emphasis has been to focus on Wharton and Walter Tull, who played in the early twentieth century, with little or no reference to Watson. For example, where Wharton's name is mentioned, he has often been referred to as Britain's first Black footballer, or Black professional footballer. In this respect, they are partially correct, in that Wharton was the first Black player to play professionally, but he was not Britain's first Black footballer. Vasili makes the point most powerfully that Arthur Wharton was Britain's first Black professional footballer when he played from the late 1880s to the 1890s for a number of clubs including Preston North End. In Vasili's later work on the history of Black footballers in Britain, he again asserts his position of Arthur

Wharton as a unique Victorian sports star. Hamilton and Hinds similarly make the point that among the names of Black footballers who paved the way for later generations, were, Arthur Wharton, who was born in Ghana, and Walter Tull, who was born in Kent, England.

Interestingly enough, Watson's achievements are not emphasised, despite the fact that Watson had been playing football, albeit as an amateur, from the mid-1870s. Sometimes Wharton's name was simply left out of discussions when it was obviously clear this should not have been the case.



Arthur Wharton



Andrew Watson (centre back)

For example, in a book cited by Vasili that was published in 1906, where they discussed Preston North End Football club, and mentioned goalkeepers of that club, Wharton's name was not mentioned. Also, by focusing on Wharton and ignoring Watson, or vice-versa, many of these studies failed to fully appreciate the significance of these two footballers on British football during these

formative years of the game in the Victorian era. More recently, Watson's significance has seen more recognition. For example, Hinds' later work, entitled *Black Lions*, acknowledges that Andrew Watson should be rightly recognised as the first great Black soccer player. Similarly, Ferguson's work on the significance of African and Caribbean footballers also makes some reference to Andrew Watson.

Talbert and Walker have at least, gone some way towards addressing the paucity of information on Andrew Watson. However, very few academic studies have devoted their attention exclusively, to the contributions of both Watson and Wharton as examples of pioneering Black footballers during the Victorian period.

One reason for the paucity of information on Black footballers during this early period in the game's development, was that many of the books on the history of football in Britain have tended to focus on the nature of the changes within the actual game, rather than the stand-out personalities who played. For example, Harvey, Mason and Walvin, examine the general conditions or factors which influenced the development of football in Britain, without going into tremendous detail about individual personalities. Their focus has been on the changing nature of the socio-economic conditions, especially within the working class, or, the impact of the freeing-up of Saturday afternoons, as time off for workers, which corresponded with the growth in popularity of Saturday afternoon football games.

In fact, Taylor makes the point that 'academic writing on sport is sometimes assailed for neglecting what actually happens on the field of play.' If we accept the view of Fishwick, that social historians should not feel 'obliged to describe matches which they never saw or to engage in second hand discussions of tactics...', we would never get to hear much about stand-out players and their influence on the game. This supports the point being made here, that because so many writers have focused on the wider context in which the game was being played and developed, important though this is, the players themselves become secondary and invisible.

### **The Significance of Watson and Wharton's Football Achievements**

Andrew Watson was born in Georgetown, Guyana in 1856 to a Scottish plantation owner named Peter Miller Watson and a local Guyanese Black woman named Hannah Rose. Andrew Watson's father was fairly wealthy and one of the Caribbean plantation owners who received compensation payments between 1834 and 1835 as part of the terms of the Emancipation Act of 1833, to formally end slavery in the British Empire. He received just over £800 for the sixteen slaves he owned in Guyana. As was common for a number of plantation owners in the Caribbean at the time,

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Andrew Watson's father sent him to Britain to attend school. When Andrew Watson's father died in 1869, he left £35,000 in his will for Andrew Watson and his sister. In August 1866 at the age of ten, he was enrolled for admission at the Heath Grammar School in West Yorkshire. He later studied at King's College in London and also started his degree at the University of Glasgow. This meant that Andrew Watson was not only a man of considerable wealth, but due to his level of education, also a gentleman of some degree of social status.

In Scotland, Watson played football for the Glasgow club Maxwell FC in 1874, before later joining a more senior club called Parkgrove, which was also located in Glasgow. In the late 1870s he served as Parkgrove Football Club's secretary, which made him the world's first Black football administrator. This role involved organising match fixtures, handling correspondences, and aspects of the club's finances. It was also while playing for Parkgrove that, according to Bone, Watson contributed with his 'ready purse and personal ability' some of the necessary finances to help secure a football ground for the Parkgrove team to play on.

This would, therefore, also make Andrew Watson the world's first Black person to financially invest in the development of football. By 1880 his skill and ability as a footballer resulted in him being selected to play in an All Glasgow Eleven team, which featured the very best players in Scotland. Andrew Watson would later be invited to join Scotland's most famous and outstanding amateur club, Queen's Park, where his quality as a full back helped to elevate him to the Scottish national team by the end of the 1880 season (Mitchell, 2013). Watson remained a member of the Queen's Park Football Club from April 1880 until he finally left to live in Liverpool in 1887.

His first football medal was at the Glasgow Charity Cup Final in 1880. In 1881 Watson was selected to captain Scotland and, on his debut, led them to a 6-1 win over England. By the end of 1882 he played two more games for Scotland against England and Wales, with both games ending 5-1 in Scotland's favour. In 1882 his club team again won the Scottish Cup final.

The fact that Watson played for, and served as, club secretary for Queen's Park, was a significant achievement. Queen's Park was at the helm of the development of Scottish football during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and the level of Scottish football was far superior to that being played in England. It was,

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for example, Queen's Park that helped to establish the main rules for the game in Scotland, such as the regulations regarding throw-ins, and the changing of ends at half time, regardless of the score.

Queen's Park Football Club was, at the time, Scotland's best, albeit, amateur team. They revolutionised the way the game was being played in Scotland, by focusing on playing combination football based on passing the ball as well as individual dribbling, which was the typical way the game was played by English teams. Queen's Park had pioneered a formation based on a 2-5-3 formation (2 defenders, 5 midfield players, and 3 forwards) rather than the 1-1-8 formation which was used by teams in England. By using this formation, Scottish teams were, during the late 1870s and during the 1880s able to defeat England in international matches. In 1881 when Watson captained England to victory, this was the formation the Scottish team used. This style of football which was pioneered by Queen's Park, was very popular in the 1880s. Watson, who was one of their star players as well as club secretary, not only played for this team between 1880-1887, when this approach was being perfected, but also served as

the club's secretary, and was fully aware of the club's philosophy and style. He was, therefore, at the cutting edge of this new approach and modernisation to the game of football.

In addition to this formation being used in Scotland, their players also started crossing the border to play in England from the 1880s, especially for clubs in the north of the country. These Scottish players were often referred to as the 'Scottish professors', and this helps to explain why Talburt refers to Watson as the 'Black Scottish professor.' By the 1890s, this formation and approach was being used by most teams especially in the North of England. In fact, the top teams in the early English league during this period, such as Preston North End, Everton, and Sunderland used this formation, that was centred on the adaptation of the Scottish approach by employing Scottish-based players who were familiar with this system of play.

It was also because of Watson's outstanding achievements and his overall social standing, that he was personally sought after, and selected to play for, the very social elitist Corinthian Football Club of London, that was established in 1882. The Corinthian Football Club, was, from its inception, an exclusive gentleman's club, restricted only to the finest players in England gathered together to 'develop a team spirit equal to that

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of the Scots'. Wealth, education, good leadership skills, fairness and team spirit, as well as a commitment to amateurism, were all considered crucial elements of this team's ethos and ambition. According to Taylor, the Corinthian Club was the 'pride of the gentlemen amateur game ... or an amateur super-club. On this basis, Andrew Watson met all the requirements. N.L. Jackson, the founder of the club, had developed a philosophy of selecting only the very best amateur players from across Britain to play for the Corinthian team. His approach paid rich dividends. By the 1885-1886 football season nine of their team represented England, and when England beat Wales in 1894, the entire eleven players were from this part time amateur Club.

That Andrew Watson was a greatly respected footballer and a gentleman can hardly be in doubt. In the *Scottish Athletic Journal* of 15 December 1885, they painted a glowing portrayal of Watson. In the article entitled 'modern athletic celebrities' Watson was singled out for his remarkable achievements, which included his prize in the high jump competition, in which he had jumped 1.78 metres at the Queen's Park sports competition in 1879

This was not a one-off situation, as he was reported to have won forty awards in high jump and also competed in boat races on the River Thames. Although he was also subjected to vulgar insults by ill-tempered players, he preserved a gentlemanly demeanour which endeared him to supporters and teammates alike. Robert Philip, citing a contemporary newspaper declared that 'Andrew Watson could, therefore, be considered among the finest players in the whole of Britain'. In many ways, therefore, Andrew Watson was a member of the sporting and social elite of British society during this period. The same, however, could not be said about Arthur Wharton.

The son of wealthy missionaries, Arthur Wharton was born in Jamestown Accra, in what is today modern Ghana on 28 October 1865. The town of Jamestown was formerly an old fort named James Fort, which was built during 1673-1674. This town would later become a significant centre of early British colonial slave trade activity. In a similar manner to Andrew Watson, Arthur Wharton's parents also had ancestral connections to Scotland. Wharton's father, Henry, was born in Grenada in the Caribbean, but Henry's father was a White Scottish merchant. Arthur's mother, Annie Florence Grant, was also of Scottish descent, as her father was a White Scottish trader, while her

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mother was from the Fante royal family in Ghana. Arthur's uncle, Francis Chapman Grant, was the owner of the Gold Coast Times and was one of the richest Euro-Africans in the then-named Gold Coast.

So, much of Arthur Wharton's early life in Britain seemed to mirror that of Andrew Watson, in that Wharton received a fairly good standard of education. He attended the Burlington Road School in West London between 1875 and 1879. Upon returning to Ghana for a few years, he later returned to Britain in 1882 to train as a missionary teacher at Shoal Hill College, Cannock until 1884, and Cleveland College in Darlington from 1884 to 1888. While still at college, Arthur played as an amateur footballer for Darlington Football Club. During the period (1883-1888), he regularly played for Darlington FC as a goalkeeper. Against his parents' wishes, upon arriving in Britain, Wharton decided to engage in a career revolving around sports, rather than entering a more 'noble' profession based on missionary or church work. In 1889 he first signed for Rotherham Town as a professional player, although he had earlier signed for the prestigious

Preston North End in 1886 as an amateur player. In total he played for at least eight different clubs in a career lasting from 1883 until 1903.

The fact that Wharton was able to play in goal for such a team as Preston North End, was particularly significant. By the late 1880s Preston North End was arguably the best football team in England, and had been influenced, in part, by the importation of Scottish players who used this combination football incorporating dribbling and passing. Their dominance of English club football could be seen from the fact that they were able to reach the semi-finals of the FA Cup in 1887. Furthermore, in March 1887, in order to commemorate Queen Victoria's 50 years on the throne, Preston North End was invited to play against the elite amateur team, Corinthian of London, as part of a festival of football at the Kennington Oval in London, in which both teams played to 1-1 draw.

Wharton could be regarded as the first Black professional player because the professional football league started in 1888 in England with twelve teams, and he turned professional the following year. These twelve teams were primarily from the North and Midlands of England, as the more socially elite clubs in the south of the country refused to be part of a professional league.

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It was, therefore, when Arthur Wharton played for Rotherham Town in 1889 that he thus became the world's first Black professional footballer. Although Andrew Watson had been playing since 1874, he played as an amateur, which is why sometimes Wharton is mistakenly described as the first Black footballer. After signing for Rotherham Town, Wharton later played for Sheffield United in 1894 and a year later played for them when they were in the English First Division, thus making him the first Black footballer to play in that league. In 1895 Wharton joined Stalybridge Rovers, in the Lancashire League as a player-coach. This was also another significant feat, as it made him the world's first Black football manager. Wharton retired from football in 1903 but continued to perform in other sports for several more years.

Wharton was said to have brought style and entertainment to the game, which was something innovative, but this sometimes resulted in him receiving criticisms from sections of the crowds. He was, for example, reported to have swung on the crossbar and caught the ball between his legs and was also famous for punching the ball

Although Wharton did not win any national football medals like Watson, he was nonetheless very highly regarded as an outstanding goalkeeper. It was even suggested that he was good enough to be called up for the England national squad but was not given the opportunity, primarily due to his poor social status, not to mention his ethnicity. For example, Garland and Rowe suggests that this was due to the desire on the part of the English Football Association of the 1880s and 1890s to insist on an 'ideal type of player' preferably from the clubs in the south of the country.

Like Watson, Arthur Wharton excelled in a number of different sports. He was fine cricketer and the 100 yards sprinter world record holder, as well as being recognised as one of England's best goalkeepers. He was he the first person in the world to run the 100 yards in 10 seconds at the Amateur Athletics Association Championship at Stamford Bridge, London, in 1886. He was also a British cycling champion, and also a rugby player. He was an outstanding cricketer and continued to play professionally after 1903 when he retired from football. For example, in 1907, when he was 40 years old, he played in a game for Rotherham Town against Denaby and scored 86 not out. The local newspaper, the Rotherham

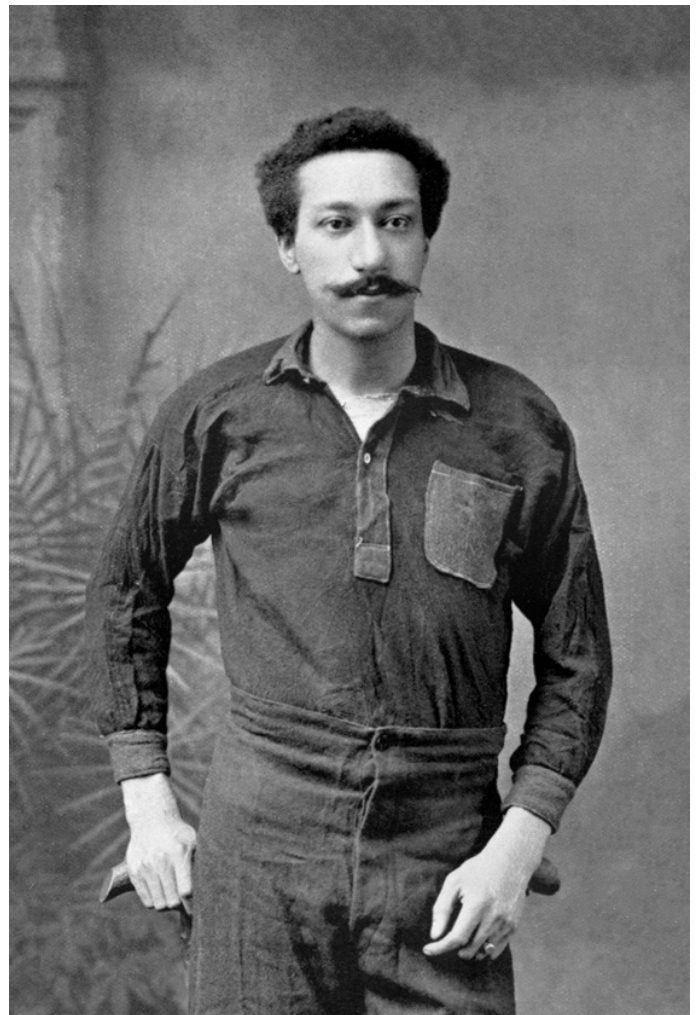
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Advertiser (10 August 1907) reported that he played a wonderful game of cricket and they were surprised that he could hit the ball so well as he scored 16 runs in one over which included two successive sixes where he hit the ball out of the ground.

Sadly, after retiring from his football and sporting career, Wharton disappeared from public life. He lived and worked in Yorkshire as coal miner and later fell into destitution and alcoholism. He died in 1930 and was buried in an unmarked grave. It seems a real tragedy that this son of wealthy missionaries, who arrived in Cannock, Staffordshire in the early 1880s as a teenage immigrant from Ghana, would later spend twenty years working as a coal miner in south Yorkshire, where he died as a pauper and in relative obscurity.

Wharton achieved great sporting success despite the prevalence of racial discrimination during the Victorian period, when he played. He was, for example, often referred to as 'darkie Wharton'. Furthermore, Wharton did not fail to often acknowledge his African roots. In fact, Galvin

also points out that some of the newspapers of the day even questioned Wharton's physical and mental capabilities in terms of the racist Victorian 'scientific' thesis of the Northern European superiority over 'the Negro'. By focusing his efforts on playing professional football, Arthur Wharton would later struggle financially. This alone would go some to explain the contrasting fortunes of the two footballers.



Arthur Wharton

Whereas Watson was able to identify with the sporting social elites, Wharton was not able to achieve this. Social elitism and classism were crucial factors which played a part in contrasting destinies.

### **Ethnicity and Elitism in British Football**

During the Victorian period in Britain the magnitude of racial prejudice and discrimination was particularly prevalent, and often prevented some Black sportspeople from achieving their full potential. One of the conspicuous features of Victorian Britain was the extent to which society was greatly shaped and influenced by a strong commitment to, and belief in, a social hierarchy that was incredibly exclusive, elitist, and wealthy. These features were also very evident in some British sport and leisure activities and were equally present within football. Much of the Victorian attitudes pertaining to sport and leisure were very definitely accompanied by varying degrees of English snobbery and feelings of superiority. For example, Robinson and Gallagher pointed out how the Victorians regarded themselves as leaders of civilisation and also pioneers of industry and progress.

The Victorian outlook was based on the view that they had been imbued with a strong sense of superiority and self-righteousness. These qualities were taught or emphasised in the main public schools.

It was in the public schools in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries where education, sports and discipline were deliberately interwoven, in order to create the next generation of British leaders. During the second half of the nineteenth century for example, the playing of games, and in particular, attendance at football, was compulsory. Thomas Arnold, who was headmaster at Rugby School between 1828 and 1848, believed that one way of attempting to gain control over the sons of the elite within their schools, was to develop some form of sporting agenda. The Victorian public schools thus became institutions tasked with the responsibility of helping to create this new British breed of young men who were imbued with the two key social features of a strong physical and moral bearing. It was this development of the muscular Christianity in young men, which was seen as a necessary component in the up-bringing of every public-educated schoolboy. In fact, Goldblatt claims that sport played an important role in hardening up the Victorian ruling class, for the task of imperial conquest and global hegemony.

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These Victorian attitudes also resulted in many high achieving Black sportspeople failing to receive the degree of recognition they would have certainly received today, had they achieved the same level of success in their sport. For example, Arthur Wharton received some degree of racial abuse and discrimination within the sport of football. Walter Tull, who played for Spurs in 1909, was also racially abused at a game at Bristol City. Instead of dealing with the issue of discrimination, and thereby fear unsettling the rest of the team, Tull was demoted to the reserves and then off loaded to another team. Racial discrimination was, however, not only confined to football. Despite the level of racial abuse Wharton and Tull experienced, they were able to excel in their sport. In the sport of boxing, a number of Black men had managed to achieve great success, but were often not recognised or afforded tremendous respect, on account of their Blackness or ethnicity.

Clark points out that the sport of boxing served as a symbol among some White people of not only their superiority in general, but also of their superiority in sports. She further adds that because of his

Blackness, Peter Jackson was first denied opportunities to fight the very best boxing champions on the grounds that Black and White boxers could not fight in the same ring.

When Jackson moved from Australia to the USA he was able to fight against a White opponent named Joe McAuliffe in December 1888, and defeat him. The Black community in San Francisco was euphoric. Despite his success as a potential heavyweight boxer, Jackson ended his boxing career and toured all over America as part of the play 'Uncle Tom' a humiliating spectacle in a play where Black people were stereotyped for their brainless athleticism or status as entertainers.

Of course, this was not the first time that a Black boxer found himself up against the wrath and racist discrimination of White opponents. Tom Molineaux was born in Virginia, USA in 1784, and started his boxing career by fighting on the plantations primarily as an entertainer for the plantation owners. He eventually bought his freedom and, after boxing in New York, came to London,

where, in 1810, he fought for the British heavyweight championship title against Tom Cribb but was controversially and unfairly beaten. The re-match in 1811 was also controversially decided in Cribb's favour. Molineaux died in 1818 in relatively poverty in Dublin, Ireland.

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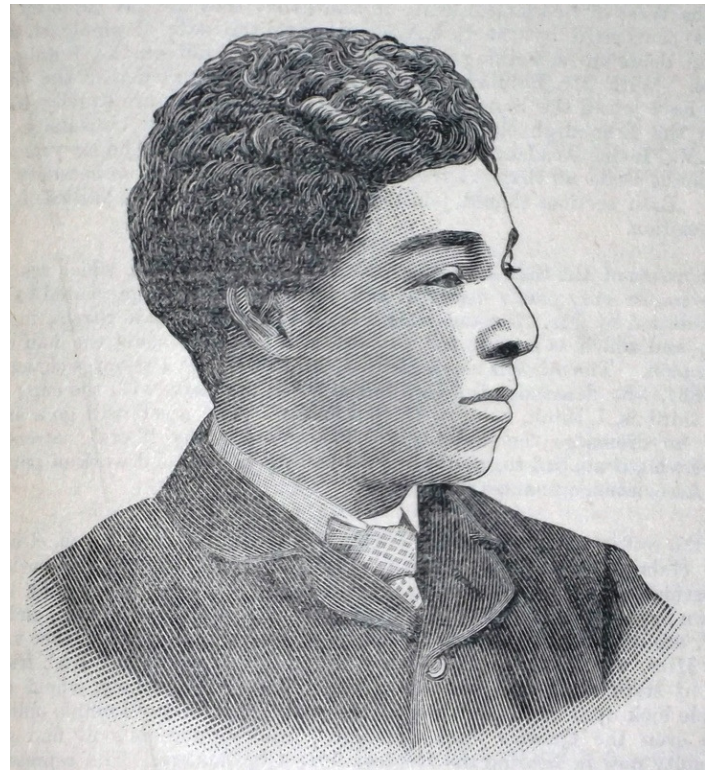
According to David Leafe, writing in the *Mail online*, Molineaux had only two fights to his name on British soil and, had made history just by being in the same ring. He was, in fact, the first Black person to fight for the British heavyweight championship.

Furthermore, Molineaux's trainer, Bill Richmond, known as the 'Black terror' was also a former slave in born in New York in 1763, as well as a boxer. Richmond had developed a good reputation as a boxer and was earning one hundred guineas a fight. Richmond had himself fought against Cribb in 1805 but was beaten by him.

Richmond, however, remained in the sport by becoming a boxing trainer and it was in this way that he became the Molineaux's trainer. In the end, though, both men failed to realise their fortunes in the sport of boxing. Racial discrimination was a critical factor in their short lived sporting career.

As Garland and Rowe assert, many Black sportspeople were seen as 'exotic' show-pieces for entertainment and thus not often taken very seriously by large sections of the White population.

A result of this racial discrimination against Black sportspeople, accompanied by the turning a blind eye, covering up or attempting to whitewash the problem away, was the furthering of both the regularisation



Andrew Watson

and normalisation of racism in sports within British society. Therefore, one of the reasons for the very few cases of racial abuse against Watson, and cases racial abuse against Wharton, Tull and other Black players in the early twentieth century was due to the 'normalisation and under-reporting' of racial abuse prevalent in British society until fairly recent times.

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the level of racial abuse and discrimination against Black sportspeople would go unchallenged by officialdom, within the Victorian period in Britain.



However, well into the twentieth century there were often instances of overt racist, and even fascist behaviour in sports.

In 1938 for example, when England's national football team played Germany in an international friendly game, the England team all gave the Nazi salute before the start of the match.

As far as Vasili was concerned, Wharton, as a resident of the industrial north of England, played

professional football for working class clubs and also ran for money, and as such could not be classed as an amateur 'gentleman' athlete. This is one of the reasons for Wharton being even more rejected by Britain's social elite. Not only is there the issue of his Blackness or ethnicity, but Wharton was a working class footballer. Moreover, working class communities did not generally write their own histories or erect statues or have power over mass media. According to Vasili, Wharton was 'grounded in his Blackness' and faced a lifelong battle with the establishment over his right to be accepted for what he did rather than what he was seen to be.

The fact that Wharton was considered good enough to be selected for the England national team but was overlooked because he was not regarded as the best or ideal fit could be due to two main reasons. One is his alleged sporting antics and showmanship as a goalkeeper which most people in Britain would not have been accustomed to. Added to this, is the fact of his ethnicity and his outspoken nature with regard to his Blackness and identity. Being good and Black is one thing, but being good, Black and vocal, was perhaps more than the football authorities during Victorian times, were able to accommodate. Little wonder he was often referred to as 'darkie Wharton'.



Arthur Wharton mural, Darlington

Both men experienced some degree of verbal abuse. Whilst it is not clear was whether Watson's abuse was of a racist nature, he was nonetheless, able to overlook these distractions and achieve tremendous success and ultimate respect by the sporting elites of British society. He was very well educated, and was the world's first football administrator when he worked as secretary for Parkgrove and then Queen's Park football clubs, both in Glasgow. He was able to perform with the very best amateur clubs, and therefore, did not need to play football in order to secure employment.

Throughout his football career, therefore, Watson remained fairly wealthy and also an amateur player. Being an amateur footballer during the 1880s, when there were moves towards professionalism, marked Watson as a distinct member of the social elites. This is also one reason why he was chosen to play for the Corinthian team in London. Above all, what this further demonstrates is the extent to which the combined issues of race and class could be used to determine the success of Black sportspeople during the Victorian period. Whereas Watson had education, wealth and good skills as a footballer, his Blackness or ethnicity did not seem to set him back

fundamentally. For Wharton, he had obvious talent and ability, but was confined primarily to the working class game. Watson, however, was able to play the game at the highest level as an amateur.

While both Black footballers were born in the British colonies overseas to fairly wealthy parents, and played a variety of sports to very high standards, their football careers took different paths. Both Watson and Wharton played for one of the very best British teams, Queen's Park and Preston North End, respectively. In addition, Watson, was selected for the elite amateur club, the Corinthian FC of London. Despite both men being Black footballers, Watson was more accepted as a member of the social sporting elite of Britain and was regarded as a gentleman. Although Wharton was a fine goalkeeper, he was often regarded as an entertainer and, probably due to racial discrimination, was unable to perform for England as an international. Despite both players being Black, it was probably Wharton's combination of his ethnicity as well as his working class associations which resulted in him being subjected to racial discrimination and his rejection from being accepted as a sporting elite.

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Dr Tony Talburt (PhD., M.A., B.A., Cert.Ed.) is senior lecturer and course lead for Black Studies at Birmingham City University. He previously taught as senior lecturer in the Centre for African and International Studies, University of Cape Coast, Ghana, and before that, was programme coordinator for the part time degree course in African and Caribbean Studies at the University of Birmingham. Talburt's main research interests are within the areas of African Diaspora political economy, African Diaspora political history and also Black British history. Some of his recent books include: *Fight for Freedom: Black Resistance and Identity* (Sub-Saharan Publishers, 2017); *Andrew Watson: The World's First Black Football Superstar* (Hansib Publishers, 2017). He has also self-published one of Britain's first children's Black British history novels, *History on the Page: Adventures in Black British History* (New Generation Publishers, 2012).

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# THE IMPORTANCE OF NEWSPAPERS AS DOCUMENTS IN AFRICAN HISTORIOGRAPHY

BY REY BOWEN

Going through the relevant files at The National Archives (TNA) at Kew gave me clues and information about Duse Mohamed Ali and John Eldred Taylor. The files gave me information locating the business interests of these two entrepreneurs who founded the *African Times and Orient Review* (ATOR), Britain's first Pan-African and Pan-Asian periodical. It confirmed what Geiss and Duffield, in more detail, had written about Ali and Taylor's joint and individual business concerns and that they had met around the time of the Universal Races Congress in London during July 1911. Yet, I had the niggling notion that something of how they met was missing. I needed to find the earliest documented evidence of when these two once well-known Africans in the British and Pan-African political and business worlds met.

Finding no luck at the TNA, I decided to research African newspapers of the early 20th century, particularly those in the then British West Africa region. I had a hunch that I should scan through the British Library index to African newspapers, which is available online. With time on my hands, I looked through many titles and pages of numerous journals until I came across *The Sierra Leone Weekly News* (TSLWN). I decided to work through the TSLWN from the inception of the ATOR in July 1912 backward to 1909/1910 or until I found a possible connection between Duse Mohamed Ali and John Eldred Taylor. To my good fortune, in an April issue, I found the link. A letter to the editor composed by John Eldred Taylor explaining being treated unfairly and not taken seriously is in the excellent company of well-known, trustworthy individuals, including Duse Mohamed Ali.

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**FREETOWN. SATURDAY APRIL 22, 1911.**

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For example, in a now out of print newspaper, TSLWN, a Letter-to-the-Editor turned my research right-side up. The letter published on 22nd April 1911 written by John Eldred Taylor, the son of a Sierra Leonean businessman and himself a leading entrepreneur, answering accusations of having to conduct illegal business dealings under his London-based company, the West African Fisheries and Industries Limited. The Nigerian Times accused Taylor of being a character of ill repute. Taylor refuted those accusations and offered his good conduct and character assurances by providing referees of utmost integrity.

Taylor was one of the committee members of the Imperial African Club with its Secretary 'Barrister Cambridge' of Gray's Inn and Treasurer 'Professor' Skerry (Mr George Edward Skerry of Skerry's College), L.E.V. McCarthy a future Solicitor-General of the Gold Coast (Ghana) and a 'Professor Duse Mohamed' author of the book *In the Land of the Pharaohs*. That means Duse Mohamed Ali and John Eldred Taylor were known to each other at least three months before the Universal Races Congress. The pages of *The Sierra Leone Weekly News* have the evidence.

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Rey Bowen is a PhD History student at the University of Chichester is researching for a thesis entitled 'Duse Mohamed Ali's Pan-Africanism 1912-1945: His influence Across the African Diaspora'

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# ARCHIVE ADVENTURES

BY KESEWA JOHN

When looking for sources and documents on Black British History, researchers seek out useful archives and repositories. And the UK is rich in resources; the British Library, the National Archives, the Black Cultural Archives, are the major national institutions but many many universities and their libraries have special collections, many other local, municipal and national institutions also contain valuable holdings, and then there's private collections. There is seemingly no shortage of avenues to explore for source material for the researcher interested in Black British lives. This section is dedicated to experiences in the archive.

For much of its recent history, Britain has had a global and imperial presence. Consequently traces and evidence of the lives of Britain's Black population can frequently be found in archives beyond those available within the British isles. Many people who lived in Britain were also born, lived and/or died somewhere else entirely, and their lives may well be well and/or better documented in archives and repositories in that or those places. While researching early twentieth

century Caribbean activists, I spent a couple of weeks doing research in Jamaica.

Repositories I used and highly recommend are the National Archives at Spanish Town, the National Library and Liberty Hall in Kingston, and the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies at the University of the West Indies' Mona campus, a short-ish bus ride away from Kingston. I also visited the Institute of Jamaica, but only briefly.

The National Archives at Spanish Town are great. Very knowledgeable helpful staff was a plus (the most helpful, warm and friendly archive staff I have ever experienced), really helpful and quick over email as well as in person. Did I mention they were exceedingly helpful? They were willing to answer questions on a range of archive trip-related questions from archival holdings to appropriate clothing and security around Spanish Town. Also remarkable was the speed with which documents arrived. It felt like by the time I'd gone back to my seat after submitting a request, the document was being handed to me. They'll also hold

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documents until you return for a few days.

The computerised database of the archive's holdings was handy, user friendly and simple to navigate, which was crucial as the material available is extensive.

The downside was having to transcribe documents by hand as the archives charge per image and so every hour felt like an exam as I tried to take copious notes carefully yet at breakneck speed. It costs \$500, approx. £2.50 per image and the reading room is the size of a school classroom, and half filled with desks so there's no hiding. They enforce this rule. I had not budgeted for this, so I wrote furiously for hours, taking a break only for lunch. While this sounds stressful, after two years of furious picture-taking on my archive trips, it actually was a welcome relief. A taste of old skool archival research, when people read the documents they looked at. Or so I imagine. Speaking of lunch: Staff were eating Tastee patties so there is somewhere to get food nearby, but I'd brought a packed lunch. If I went back with the same security issues, I would do that again.

The National Library of Jamaica has collections and personal papers of Una Marson and Amy Ashwood Garvey I was interested in, as well as a newspaper collection and friendly and helpful staff. Less so than the archives, but good nonetheless and they were also available via email.

There seems to be a problem with their catalogue reflecting their actual holdings. Two newspapers I had references for before arriving were not listed in the catalogue. Then on further enquiry, they were tracked down. Then I was told only X year was available, again, with pushing, turned out Y year was also available. Some items I asked for within collections I wanted to see were not located at all.

Situated in the safe-ish part of downtown and on a relatively main road, it was easy to get to the National Library, which is next door to the Institute of Jamaica and round the corner (or a couple of blocks from) the National Gallery of Jamaica. Also a short 10 minute walk from the parade from whence buses go out of downtown Kingston.

Liberty Hall at 76 King Street, originally the Kingston headquarters for the Universal Negro Improvement Association, is now a community centre with a reference library and exhibition space dedicated to maintaining and educating on the legacy of the Garvey movement. It's a relatively new institution, but both the reference library and exhibition are excellent and worth a visit for researchers working on early twentieth century Black political organising. Liberty Hall also employs scholars so it's a great way to engage with researchers based in the region.

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On the lovely, sprawling University of the West Indies campus at Mona, I didn't get into the library; it was \$50 for up to 2 weeks' usage for non-affiliated staff and students. If you're working on a project with a UWI academic however, you get free access to the library at Mona if your collaborator writes you a letter. I had previously accessed the UWI libraries at Cave Hill (Barbados) and St Augustine (Trinidad and Tobago), who don't charge external academics, so instead I made a beeline for the Sir Arthur Lewis Institute of Social and Economic Studies which houses Jamaican lifelong labour activist Richard Hart's private papers.

Hart lived in the UK for decades, and microfilmed copies of the collection are available at Senate House, but the original documents are in Jamaica. The centre staff let me view the Richard Hart Collection for free. The collection was a four story filing cabinet. The top drawer, full and organised, the second, half full, semi-organised, the 3rd and 4th bulging and semi-organised. The Caribbean Labour Congress files, in which I was most interested, were in the top two. On another trip to Mona, I saw a completely different side of the campus when I met with a Jamaican scholar at the Senior Common Room, a private members bar at the Mona campus for academics which was open-air, relaxed and just an ideal place for discussing history for hours on end.

The following was the summary of

my thoughts on travel to Jamaica as a mid-30s Black woman researching Caribbean and Black British history: Jamaica was amazing. Scary dangerous but delicious delicious food (\$650-1800 for a meal is normal), awesome buzzing vibrant capital, excellent and affordable public transport (\$100 for buses and route taxis most places) and great nightlife. Also more museums than I could get round to exploring (sighs dreamily). I stayed in Trafalgar Park, in the home of a local Jamaican family who rented a room via Airbnb for about £35 a night. I could walk into New Kingston or quickly and easily get to the major bus terminal at Halfway Tree to go anywhere else. Security is an issue. As an experienced solo woman traveller, I wouldn't plan to go to Jamaica



Kesewa John

alone again. It was risky to be in some places anytime (eg Spanish Town) and dangerous to be out at night alone around Kingston. Daytime, by dressing simply, not carrying a massive bulging bag, walking with purpose, and sticking to main and major thoroughfares I was fine. I only took route taxis with red plates and chequed print running along the sides. I almost always took official JUTC yellow buses, which are large, slow, air conditioned and filled with old people, but safe.

When I was feeling brave (slash in a hurry) I jumped on coasters, which were far less comfortable, seating wise, speed wise, and have a totally different (read: 40 years younger) demographic. They feel less safe, but I don't know whether or not they are. It must be noted however, that Kingstonians are jumpy; they won't stand too close to you, nor should you to them. Bad things do happen. You do have to be alert and aware of your surroundings to stay safe. Multiple people warned me to not ask directions from just anybody if I was lost. I left my laptop at home and uploaded when I

got back; *everyone* said it was unsafe to walk around with it. My backup camera became my back up if my phone got jacked, rather than if it breaks midway through the day. I will definitely go back to Jamaica, but not alone. I need Sorrel Red Stripe (\$150-400 depending on purchase location) and Patty and Coco Bread (c.\$250) in my life. I have to go back. This information was accurate in January 2019, prices and opening times may well have changed since.

This information was accurate in January 2019, prices and opening times may well have changed since.

Spanish Town was having its state of emergency extended when I went there for the archives in January 2019. A Jamaican friend said this of Spanish Town '99% of the time you'll be fine [going into ST as a solo black woman traveller] but that 1% (makes a face of discomfort) you might not come back.' She grew up in Spanish Town and is based in Jamaica. In the end, I was taxi'd in and out of Spanish Town.

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Kesewa John is a Junior Fellow at the Université des Antilles interested in the intersections of Black feminist and Black radical histories of early 20th-century Caribbean activism. Her research focuses on the colonial Caribbean's radical press, collaborations between French- and English-speaking Caribbean anti-imperialists, and the place of Afro-Caribbean women within Caribbean historical narratives.

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# FROM JAMAICA TO THE UK, SEARCHING FOR CLIFF TYRELL AN ARTIST IN THE PERIPHERY

BY RACHAEL MINOTT

Much has been written of the relationship between the Caribbean and Britain, particularly around the movement of people during moments of mass migration. Many of these stories explore the larger significance of these moments on both territories' economy, the prejudices and perceptions of people, and changing national identities. In the midst of these stories of national change, the narratives of individuals have been lost, anonymised or generalised into a generational experience. However the socio-economic realities of both regions have been and remain complex, and through the narratives of individuals we can move away from a representative history to one that provides insight into this complexity, to the impact of multiple identities, experiences and personalities; to the pressures of personal and professional expectations and goals.

In this article we will explore one man's journey from Jamaica to England in pursuit of a career as an artist, his struggle with his mental health, falling in love and starting a family. Leaving a country where he was on the edge of greatness, he landed quietly in wartime England, becoming a part of the vibrant art scene. Yet he is only remembered in reference notes in a series of other people's stories. His narrative championed by his daughter, his legacy lurking within our national collections. I want to take you through my journey of searching for Cliff Tyrell.

This story is about Cliff Tyrell but it is also about researching an individual's life through their archival footprints. My journey researching Tyrell's narrative began when a colleague shared a few digitalised images of illustrations in the National Archive collection for a publication entitled 'African ABC' created between 1939-

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1946 (INF 3/612 - INF 3/642 and INF 3/1534) by a Jamaican artists for the British Ministry of Information. As a Jamaican artist myself, I was interested to learn more about the creator: Cliff Tyrell. However cursory research only seemed to reveal his links to another Jamaican artist Carl Abrahams who referenced Tyrell repeatedly as his friend and the person who helped him pursue working as a cartoonist early in his career.

Carl Abrahams became one of the cornerstone artists of pre and post independent Jamaica, and Tyrell was referenced a number of times in writing about him. However sometimes he was referenced as an English visitor, while other references to him were as a St Agnes (Cornwall, UK) artist. As a cosmopolitan country for centuries it was possible that Cliff Tyrell was an artist of Cornish descent, born in Jamaica who travelled to England during the Second World War.



African ABC Book pieces 1 of 31', Cliff Tyrell, 1939-1946 The National Archives Collection  
REF: INF 3/642 1 of 31



The mystery continued as I found more and more references to Tyrell with little detail such as, portraits of him by the artists Paul Beadle (1939) and Ann Henderson (1947) where the images hadn't been digitised and no context existed online. What I was able to find through reviewing the Kingston Gleaner's online archives was that Cliff Tyrell was born in 1906 in Jamaica and died 1992 in Cornwall. It was apparent that Tyrell was seen as a proficient illustrator and caricaturist, he was awarded the Silver Musgrave Award in 1936 - an award granted by the Institute of Jamaica for accomplishments in art, science, and literature.

In an article in 1934 we get a suggestion of his place within the Jamaican cultural scene of the time:

*I must have a line or two, however, about the drawings of Cliff Tyrell, our finest cartoonist, who has done remarkably good work in this issue of "Planters Punch." I should like to write more about Tyrell, but a good part of these columns has already been taken up with my remarks about myself and Mr. deLisser, and I find that I have not said half enough about these two. So Cliff must wait.*

- Kingston Gleaner, December 1, 1934, p. 12



African ABC Book pieces 1 of 31', Cliff Tyrell, 1939-1946 The National Archives  
Collection REF: INF 3/629 1 of 31



During my journey to find out about Tyrell, I was constantly confronted with these tantalising moments, where it was clear that he was admired and celebrated, but that no one had truly taken the time to place him at the centre of the story. It was like trying to draw a picture of him but only seeing him through my peripheral vision. It wasn't until I gained access to an article in the Journal of the St Agnes Museum Trust, penned by Tyrell's daughter Theresa Edwards in 2017-2018 which was done in memory of her father, where Tyrell was in central focus.

Writing the story of her father's life and journey from Jamaica to St Agnes, Edwards had explored many avenues of research, using personal collection items and stories of her father. The article was written 25 years after his passing, and he had suffered with dementia in his later life. With Edwards as the author, you get a touching personal account of her father's life, but with the echoes of all the unknowns. The incomplete notes on his friendship and influence tantalises us with their promise of his impact but trail off. The archives are incomplete and Tyrell's story is still a puzzle with pieces missing.



African ABC Book pieces 1 of 31', Cliff Tyrell, 1939-1946 The National Archives Collection  
REF: INF 3/614 1 of 31



In the UK, it was Tyrell's daughter who had been researching and correcting sources about her father for years. In Jamaica, it was Paulette Kerr whose passion and appreciation of his impact as a political cartoonist that allowed me to work towards piecing together some of his story. The piece that I would like to add to this puzzle, is that of an art historian, exploring Tyrell's work, how they compared to his contemporaries, why he may have shifted mediums from cartoons to sculpture and how we might consider him within the cannon of Jamaican art and the wider world.

From Edward's article and a subsequent call we shared, I know that Tyrell left Jamaica in 1937 on British Council scholarship to study at the Central School of Arts and Crafts (today Central Saint Martin's College of Art and Design, University of the Arts London) supposedly funded by Dr. Josiah Oldfleid. After arts school, he was with the RAF for a short period of time, working in a torpedo factory in North London. Edwards explains that her father suffered something akin to a nervous breakdown and a dear friend of his invited him to stay in Edinburgh to recover. This is where he met and married Theresa's mother. They

lived in London together for some time, but she was uncomfortable with the Bohemian lifestyle of the London art scene. After coming into a small inheritance, she bought a small house in Cornwall, far away from her Scottish family who disapproved of her relationship to Tyrell. She left London in hopes that she and Tyrell could enjoy a quiet life together, building him a studio space from which to work. But Cliff did not want to leave London and for many years only stayed with them in Cornwall part time, as he tried to make it as an artist in London. He never truly made a living from his work.

There are many reasons that artist do not receive recognition in their lifetime and I will not speculate on the reasons for Tyrell when I have only begun to research him, however in explaining his shift from caricature work to sculpture and other art forms, in correspondence from Theresa Edwards published by the Kingston Gleaner in 1987, she recounts the content of a letter she received predicting that, "Cliff Tyrell would have been an adornment as a cartoonist to any newspaper anywhere in the world."

She went on to note, "my father, attempted to get his work accepted by the British Press but was met with what he felt to be Insurmountable colour prejudice and gave up trying... He became a talented sculptor and

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was especially good at making portrait heads cast in bronze, he was also a prolific painter, sometimes painting pictures of that Jamaica we had left behind.'

And indeed such images of Jamaican motifs can be seen in works of his collected by the Victoria and Albert Museum (Banana cart 1930s, V&A collection E.934-1977), and the University of Arts London (Mother bathing baby in wooden tub, UAL collection P.975).

While he never made a substantial living from his artwork, his desire to stay in London, and his presence in UK national collections provide evidence that he had a place in the vibrant art world in Britain at the time. Edwards shared an anecdote that she modelled for one of her father's bronze bust as a baby while he worked in Joseph's Epstein's studio. Tyrell in turn modelled for Epstein, his torso was used to construct the chimera style artwork that is Epstein's sculpture of Lucifer that graces the round room of Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery. The artist Klaus Meyer, when discussing his time



Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery Round Room showing the 'Lucifer' (1944-45) sculpture by Sir Jacob Epstein from the Birmingham Museums Trust Photo archive

at art school, described Cliff Tyrell as a 'something of a curiosity' and a 'very charming fellow' totally accepted in the group and the first 'Black man' he had ever befriended. He shared the Tyrell also made etchings, but noted that the printing process was unionised and didn't allow students to handle the presses, so they were not allowed to do their own printing- which may explain Tyrell's shift to painting, sculpture and ceramics.

One of the reasons I had not been certain if Cliff Tyrell was a Jamaican artist or a British artist visiting Jamaica, is because the etchings held by the National Archives, while they seemed to demonstrate an intimate knowledge and experience of drawing Black figures, was clearly influenced by European schools of art. Now many of the founding artists of Jamaica were trained either in Europe or by artists who were trained in Europe, those who were not were called the Intuitive artists. But his work held by the Victoria and Albert Museum and by University Arts London, showcase his expression of Jamaican motifs in a way that feels more familiar to the cannon on the island and works by his Caribbean contemporaries such as Carl Abrahams, Edna Manley,

Mallica 'Kapo' Reynolds, John Dunkley and Ronald Moody. Where echoes of these motifs exist within the African ABC series they are firmly presented within the Colonial Office and the Central Office for information's visual language at the time, illustrations that would not have been out of place in a Ladybird publication. In fact many of the drawings sit comfortably next to photographs from that time which presented the British colonies in a positive, but limited, frame as a means of gathering support of the empire at the eve of its downturn.

In fact the intention of the African ABC was likely to encourage the British West African (as the territories were known then) war effort and so would use this romanticised imagery that relied heavily on depictions of children and so education and families. As well as civil structures such as courts houses, hospitals and the military to highlight the perceived structural benefits of the empire within colonies, but would not represent the hardships, inequalities and brutalities present within these structures. Tyrell's illustrations had a large focus on showing the leaders of both empire and colonies, showing the UK Royal Family and the Asantehene (likely Prempeh II); and moments where they showed each other respect and cooperation, which I feel were the underlying intentions of his drawings: to engender this respect

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and cooperation.

In his self-referential sketch in the Africa ABC, of the children reading the African ABC, holding the image of themselves as they appear in the sketch on its back cover, you get a playful nod to surrealism, to humour and to that satirical energy that was present within his Planter Punch body of work. I am able to get a sense of a man influenced by so many things, and experimenting with his practice. This journey, searching for Cliff Tyrell has made me confident that there is more to this story, further stones to overturn and other artists to find like him, present in the further reading, waiting for the chance to be at the centre of the story

Note: This is a revised version of a blog 'Searching for Cliff Tyrell' originally published by the National Archives, 28th January 2021.

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# FINDING A 'CELOURED MAN': RECLAIMING THE BLACK PAST

BY NORENA SHOPLAND

One hundred and four years ago a 'well-known coloured man' died on a train as he was making his way home to Swansea. His death was curious because despite apparently being well-known there was hardly anything in the newspapers about him. I came across the piece when looking for short articles to use for Black History Month Wales but my curiosity as to who this 'well-known' man was aroused so I set about researching him in greater depth.

Unable to find any more about George Arthur Cupid in the newspapers, I turned to Ancestry.com to check out the census returns and was delighted to see his great-granddaughter had already uploaded a family tree with images of George and other family members. She kindly gave permission for them to be

reproduced in a blog and eventually I was able to find out more details.

George was born in 1873 in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and while it is not known when he came to the UK it was probably in the late 19th century.



'Died in Train', *South Wales Weekly Post*, 2 June 1917

He later married a local woman, Maud Matilda and they had seven children. George served as a seaman in the Royal Navy Reserves, for which he received a long service medal in 1910, was a Mason, and worked as a furnace worker smelting zinc in Swansea. Made ill by the noxious atmosphere of the foundry he began to suffer bad health and died on the train, aged just 44.

One of the most interesting members of the family was George and Maud's second son Cyril Cupid (1908-1965) who was a well-known sprinter. In 1932 Cyril became the Welsh Champion in both the 100- and 220-yard races and in 1934 became the first Welshman to run 100 yards under 10 seconds, clocking up 9.8. The feat earned him a place in the first Welsh team to compete in the Empire (now Commonwealth) Games. Cyril won a total of eight 100- and 220-yards titles between 1930 and 1934, including four consecutive sprint doubles, a record that was to stand until just after the Second World War.

I published the blog on my old website where it was read by Uzo Iwobi OBE from Race Council Cymru who invited me onto their new project Windrush Cymru,

researching Wales' Windrush generation. This gave me an opportunity to try out more research methodologies resulting in the discovery of many unpublished Black Welsh individuals.

In early 2021 Gwilym Games from Swansea Library, who had taken an interest in the Cupid family, submitted Cyril's name to Swansea Council when they invited locals to contribute names as part of the City Centre redevelopment plans. As a result, Cyril is to have his name immortalised in a street name - more can be read on this by clicking [here](#).

All of this from one very short article in a newspaper.

### Windrush Cymru:

The *Windrush Cymru Project – Our Voices, Our Stories, Our History*, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund, is a project which 'directly responds to a call from elders of the Windrush Generation who wanted to ensure that the legacy of their generation is captured for posterity.' It is a project about:

*collecting, recording, documenting, sharing and celebrating the contributions of the Windrush generation who came to UK between 1948 and 1988. Although the Windrush period of immigration is usually documented as between 1948*

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*and 1973, this project extends the period by 15 years to include the experiences of more citizens who moved to UK and eventually Wales, in response to Britain's post-war recruitment drive.*

More information can be found on Race Council Cymru's page by clicking [here](#).

Part of my work on Windrush Cymru was the examination of ships' passenger lists which often provide names, ages, marital status, occupations, and where they had travelled from. These lists can be acquired from various genealogy sites, in this case Ancestry.com. What this research concentrated on was the destination addresses that had to be provided by passengers and recovering those in Wales. It should be borne in mind that this does not guarantee individuals actually came to Wales, addresses were often passed around and could be quoted simply as a compliance to registration and in a number of examples seemingly several unrelated people used the same address. It also does not guarantee people remained in Wales, or indeed in the UK.

Ships were sailing regularly from African and Caribbean countries to

the UK, throughout naval history to the mid-20th century when flights became more common, but it is mainly the 20th century voyages that are sources of addresses. Prior to searching for these however, a ship's name is needed and a number were recovered by examining other writings on immigration, or by using place name keyword searches in the *Ancestry Immigration & Travel*, including *Passenger Lists* option. These lists are not searchable so it is a labour of love scrolling through them. Familiarity with place names for any given local is also necessary.

Using these methods 18 ship names were identified, including the famous 22 June 1948, SS Empire Windrush voyage, and 47 passengers giving a Welsh address recovered. The earliest was the S.S. Bayano docking on 7 May 1930 when Lawrence Trott, a 20-year-old student from Trinidad disembarked at Avonmouth, giving his destination as 'Mr Edgar, Bryn Hyfryd, Llanfaes, Beumaris, Anglesey'. The last was Sylvester Haughton, a 48-year-old chauffeur, on board the Begona that docked at Southampton on 11 September 1960 from St Christopher (now St Kitts) who apparently headed for 83 Richard St, Cardiff. On the Windrush voyage, 31 of the 492 passengers gave Welsh addresses.

Of the 47 passengers, 13 were

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women, the first arriving on 25 May 1955 on board *Columbia*. Ena Totman, housewife, from Trinidad was with her husband Kelvin and they were due to stay at Swansea for three months. Two women arrived with their husbands and children and 8 arrived alone. Occupations ranged from dressmaker, student, civil servant, nurse, clerk, domestic servant, and seamstress. Once names are recovered, they can be checked in census returns and other sources on genealogy sites and addresses can be used in keyword searches to see who else was living there as these addresses were occupied by a number of families and various occupations and names can be examined.

Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 lockdown this research was halted and it is not known if it can be resumed, the *Windrush Cymru* project having come to an end.

### Research guide:

While the *Windrush Cymru* project was taking place, I was also looking at creating a new BAME research guide similar in approach to a previous guide I had co-authored with Daryl Leeworthy for Glamorgan Archives, entitled *Queering Glamorgan*. This had offered research techniques for

locating lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT) people in the historical record. One of the reasons this guide was commissioned by the Archives was to encourage more people to research a topic that has been hidden or forbidden for centuries - and to illustrate that LGBT people have always played a role in society, something often omitted from general histories. Indeed, this is true of many subjects, such as women whose histories have perpetually lagged behind that of men, currently of all biographies on Wikipedia only 17% are about women (more about this can be read on [Wikipedia:WikiProject Women](#)).

For other subjects such as race, religions, disabilities the situation is worse which is why we need more people to do original research so that these histories are not omitted from a wider picture of UK life. We have witnessed recent events showing what happens when groups of people are neglected, such as the ongoing Windrush scandal and growth of the Black Lives Matter movement. As a country we have had to come to terms with our unpleasant connections to slavery and recognise the importance of that which causes pain to our fellow citizens and act accordingly, such as the removal of statues and memorials. The Welsh Senedd is currently auditing statues and memorials in Wales that have a

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connection to historical slavery and the British Empire.

The Senedd is working on the inclusion of Black history in the forthcoming national curriculum for Wales and activists across the UK have a campaign to get LGBT subjects also included. History has always been dogged by the idea that it is 'boring' because of the over reliance on royalty, wars, and politics yet history is full of 'stories' of ordinary people, like George and Cyril Cupid. I am involved in developing teacher training materials using *Queering Glamorgan* and my book on research techniques to show teachers how much fun it can be for young people to discover these types of local stories for themselves. One such workshop was presented at the Pride in Education conference, 11-13 June 2021 ([click here](#)) and possibly for the Educate Out Racism conference 17/18 September 2021 ([click here](#)). Building this type of research into the curriculum will encourage students to take pride in the diversity of their local areas and add new stories to our collective history.

To start though, we need tools and with the LGBT research guide it had been necessary to create a new methodology due to a number of

difficulties with existing means. When beginning any research project, regardless of the subject, it is essential to start with a list of words and phrases - a glossary of terms to put into search engines - but there are problems with the traditional form of these. The first is that having exhausted the list there is nowhere left to go; secondly, they rarely come accompanied by timelines, so researchers may be fruitlessly searching in a period when terms did not exist; and thirdly, there are rarely caveats on how terms are understood at the time and changes in definition over centuries. Others have found similar issues with their research.

In 2002 the CASBAH project was set up by the Institute of Commonwealth Studies funded by the Research Support Libraries Programme (RSLP) to provide research resources relating to Caribbean Studies and the history of Black and Asian peoples in the UK. The website provides useful information on searching archives and guidelines on conducting those searches and can be accessed [here](#).

Another excellent BAME guide was compiled by intern, Clarissa Chew, at the National Library of Scotland entitled *Inclusive Terminology Guide and Glossary* (May 2021) and can be accessed by joining the 'Cultural Heritage Terminology Network' group on this link for [Slack](#).

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When constructing these types of keyword lists it is important to bear in mind that writers will often ignore glossary terms. Individuals, whether they are journalists, diarists, letter writers or those filling out forms, do not all use the same words or phrases and these individualistic styles of writing may be missed if using a set list. The glossary for *Queering Glamorgan* was constructed by using the individualistic styles of writers, all taken from real sources, resulting in a more ‘pick-and-mix’ approach. One of the most fruitful methods was not

to look for what people were but what they had done and so successful was this approach over 4,000 articles were recovered, 80% of which unpublished outside their original source. This resulted in my book *A History of Women in Men’s Clothes* which explores many aspects of women’s histories not examined before.

This example shows how the research was based. In the left-hand column, a selection of word choices is listed which could be combined in a variety of ways. The right-hand column contains explanatory notes.

Woman; women; female; lady; girl; lass	With no specific terminology to denote same-sex activity before the late-19 <sup>th</sup> century, women could often be found in ‘disguise.’ Cross-dressing did not necessarily denote same-sex activity, but a number of cases have been found using these terms.
in:	
male; man’s; lad’s; boy’s; gentleman’s:	
clothes; attire; habiliments; apparel; costume; dress; breeches; breeks; trousers; trowsers; pantaloons; garb; uniform; navigator’s suit	Whilst it was not illegal for a woman to wear men’s clothes (as it was on some parts of the Continent), women were often arrested, as they were suspected of criminal activity. Archive records may not include cross-dressing

## Queering Glamorgan, Glamorgan Archives - downloadable [here](#).

Queering Glamorgan has been downloaded over 1,500 times, demonstrating the need for these types of guides and I furthered the methodology in my book *A Practical Guide to Searching LGBTQIA Historic Records*, which is essentially a toolkit for researchers that is applicable to many subjects, not just LGBT.

Combining a mix of traditional glossary terms, along with the 'pick-and-mix' style, gives the researcher greater returns as the search criteria is widened enormously. It also tackles problems caused by faults in the Optical Character Recognition (OCR) software (which takes text from an image and produces it as usable text) which may miss terms and phrases. Torn or crumpled pages, blurred or smudged characters and the OCR will struggle, particularly with vowels, and compensates by inserting alternatives. This piece from Wales Newspapers Online from 1885 shows how the term 'coloured man' in the OCR becomes 'celoured man'.

This alteration by the OCR is common, so try out different spellings or replacing a character with an exclamation mark (!) as some search engines allow it to be used as a replacement for a letter.

Unlike Google searches which uses 'fuzzy' techniques to recognise misspelt words and will return what the search engine thinks might interest you, OCR software, is very literal and will only look for exactly what you have entered. This means if a word is spelt wrong no results will be given unless the spelling mistake matches similar mistakes in the OCR. In many texts, particularly newspapers, 'widows and orphans', those split words which appear on two lines, will produce different results - checking for "loured woman" will produce results that will not appear in searches for "coloured woman" or "woman of colo" - variations can of course be tried by splitting the words in different ways. In other instances, coloured may be spelt as 'colored' as in current American spelling. Due to the literal nature of the OCR the possessive s will not be included so "black



Yankee Yarns, South Wales Echo, 31 August 1885

woman” will produce different results to “black woman’s”. The literal nature will also mean that the more words you include in a search the greater chance for it to go wrong, it will only take one character not to be recognised to result in no hits.

Sources for searching are numerous but probably the most popular are online newspapers. The most famous of these are: Welsh Newspapers Online (WNO); British Library Newspapers (BLN) (which can be accessed by anyone holding a UK public library card); Trove in Australia; Papers Past in New Zealand; and Chronicling American. Many of the ‘colonial’ 19th century papers often include articles not covered by the UK press. There are numerous reasons for this: articles were often sent in blocks which could be used verbatim but if space in the publication was limited stories could be truncated, so it helps to check as many difference

international editions as possible to get more details. Even in the UK press stories will alter in length and detail according to space. By accessing several stories, a bigger picture can be compiled, particularly if the story runs for days or weeks. Importantly, international papers may be less likely to hold back controversial details.

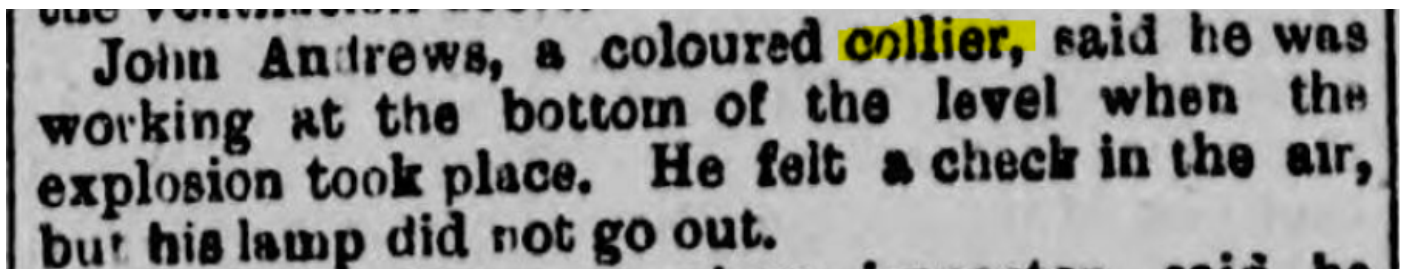
With such a vast array of material available to be searched a few things should be borne in mind, such as

searching the same newspaper via different sources. An example of this is using the term “coloured collier” in WNO, which covers Wales only publications, when 14 hits are returned. Using the same term in BLN, which covers the UK, there are only 10 hits. Some Welsh publications are included in BLN, such as the *Western Mail*, and while the key term returned no results in WNO for 1891, the BLN version of the same paper produced one hit.

Examining the two examples it can be seen that the ‘o’ in collier has two small nicks and while this did not prevent the BLN’s OCR from recognising the word, that of the WNO did not. Showing why it is important to use as many different sources as possible.

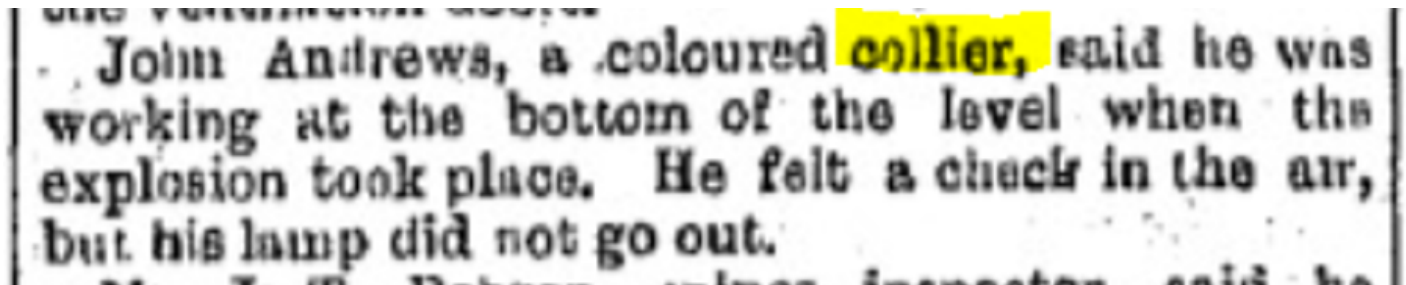
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John Andrews, a coloured collier, said he was working at the bottom of the level when the explosion took place. He felt a check in the air, but his lamp did not go out.

'The Abercanaid Colliery Explosion', *Western Mail*, 2 September 1891



John Andrews, a coloured collier, said he was working at the bottom of the level when the explosion took place. He felt a check in the air, but his lamp did not go out.

'The Abercanaid Colliery Explosion', *Western Mail*, Issue: 6954, 2 September 1891

When searching in newspapers the researcher can be faced with a large number of hits, for example in WNO the term “coloured woman” produces 572 hits and “coloured man” 5,646 and these need to be sifted through to extract those relating to Wales. A large number of these hits will be repeats as newspapers often produced a number of versions a day and each will be listed separately. It is worth checking different issues however, because as the day wore on, more and more stories were added thereby forcing a curtailing of earlier articles and it is important to note which issue you are reading as the story in the last edition may contain only a fraction of the story in the morning issue.

Another way of searching is to use Boolean or operational commands.

These can expand or restrict searching. For example, ‘coloured miner’ will produce 4 hits in WNO, while combining “coloured man” with the Boolean command AND, and the word miner, e.g. “coloured man” AND miner will produce 75 hits. This difference is because the ‘operator’ selects those articles on the same page containing the first phrase, kept whole by the use of quotation marks, and the word miner. The AND must be in capitals or the OCR will think it is simply the word ‘and’. For long articles it could mean the two terms are unrelated but it should return results not found using simply “coloured man”. Using the pick-and-mix style glossary the combination of searches is bounded only by the researcher’s imagination. For example, Boolean commands can be used with a mixture of terms, for example, inputting:

“black woman” AND Welsh into Google Books, and selecting 19th century publications, returned this piece from Tredegar:

During 1837 the bank buildings in Morgan-street were in the course of erection, and completed previous to the end of the year. The bank being opened a manager *pro tem.* was appointed, with whom was a young African girl as a servant,—“a real black woman”—who excited great curiosity, being the first black lady that made her appearance in the town. Shortly after the

Anon. History of Tredegar: Subject of Competition at Tredegar 'Chair Eisteddfod', Held February the 25th, 1884 (Cardiff, 1885) p.52. Google Books

Note that the word Welsh is not included in the extract but it does appear elsewhere in the book showing that even if the terms are far apart, results can still be found. In addition, articles often include several ways of describing people and so more terms are generated - in this case, although the search term was “black woman”, the phrase “black lady” is included in the extract.

Just prior to lockdown Glamorgan Archives and I had begun to look at compiling a Black history research guide similar to Queering Glamorgan but this is now on hold until more normal working conditions can be established. Part of the project included enlisting volunteers in groups attending the archive, social working groups where several people can be in a group and over a coffee and chat and search online together, or people across Wales searching digital records from their home. A preliminary glossary of 108 words and phrases has been volunteers. For example, in WNO

established and searching would be divided into terms and periods in order to provide small amounts of work in order not to overwhelm

with the term “coloured man” the greatest number of returns is the 1890s, returning 1,423 hits and rising to 2,316 in the 1900s. In BLN the total number of hits is 3,236 but they cannot be as easily divided into decades as the WNO.

By the 1910s the WNO hits have dwindled to 577 but the figure is misleading. Both they and the BLN are essentially 19th century databases but some digitalisation was extended to cover the lead up to, and inclusion of the First World War for the anniversary of the end of the war in 1918. Content from 1900-1919 is therefore extremely patchy and better results can be gained from the paid for newspaper archive sites or manually search microfiche in archives and libraries.

Digitalisation is an extremely costly and time-consuming task and while there are hundreds of papers available to be searched, the majority have not been digitalised. The nationals and leading publications

are often covered first which often means local titles can only be accessed via a trip to the relevant archive or library.

### **Coloured colliers:**

As noted earlier, sometimes it is more fruitful to look not at what people are, but by what they were doing, such as occupations. While constructing the draft glossary for the research guide, I came across a number of returns about coloured colliers and passed them on to Ceri Thompson, curator at the Big Pit Museum, part of Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, who I knew was examining more diversity in the mining collections. While some work has been done in England on BAME miners little had been done previously in Wales. This work is ongoing but so far thirty-eight named individuals have been identified. Cross-checking in Ancestry has matched eight from newspaper articles to census returns. Further non-digital research was prevented by lockdowns but once access to archives is possible research can be furthered by chasing the names recovered from newspaper searches.

One of the difficulties with searching in newspapers is that most individuals named, whatever their background, are there for sensational reasons resulting in numerous

negative stories about crimes, paternity issues, and the like. The most extreme case is that of William Augustus Lacey who was executed in 1900 for murdering his wife. It does however, provide the first picture of a coloured collier in Wales.



Execution at Cardiff, Cardiff Times,  
25 August 1900, p. 7.

Negative searches can be turned to positive ones by using one name through census records to show how long people had lived in certain areas and their family members, to build up a demographic picture. Further research into what people were doing

Further research into what people were doing can be applied in a similar way by searching for 'coloured seaman' which in WNO returns 1,211 hits; 'coloured fireman', 154 hits; returns for women are always lower but 'coloured nurse' 45 hits; 'coloured maid' 28 hits. When changing the term to 'black seaman' returns 82 hits most of which are different from those used for 'coloured seaman', and so on.

This article is intended to outline some of the work being carried out in researching Black history in Wales. With the changes in how Windrush Cymru had to work due to lockdowns, and the project coming to an end, the research I have generated now needs to find a home.

Hopefully, if the research guide can be re-started the passenger list findings can be added to this. The work on the coloured colliers continues and hopefully lessons learned there can also be added to the proposed research guide. The popularity of Queering Glamorgan shows how important research guides are for those wanting to explore historical records themselves. One of the important factors with the guide, and my subsequent book, is that this is something accessible to all, you do not need a history degree to research history. Myself and Laila El-Metoui run training sessions on LGBTQ+ Language Use in History and every

session is sold out to students, academics, archivists and curators, and those with a general interest in history, once again showing that people are actively seeking this kind of training. We need to provide more guides of these kinds for Black history, ethnic history, disability, and other histories which have been generally been ignored. As Marian Gwyn, Head of Heritage at Race Council Cymru, points out, young Black people need to know that throughout history there were people just like them growing up in Wales.

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Norena Shopland has a Master's degree in heritage studies. She has worked for the British Museum, National Museums Scotland and the Museum of London and other heritage organisations. Now specialising in LGBT+ studies, women's and Welsh histories she is responsible for several ground-breaking projects. Her book *Forbidden Lives: LGBT stories from Wales* is the first completely historical work on Welsh sexual orientation and gender identity. Her book *A Practical Guide to Searching LGBTQIA Historic Records* (Routledge, 2020) provides the groundwork for training sessions on *LGBTQ+ Language use in history*.

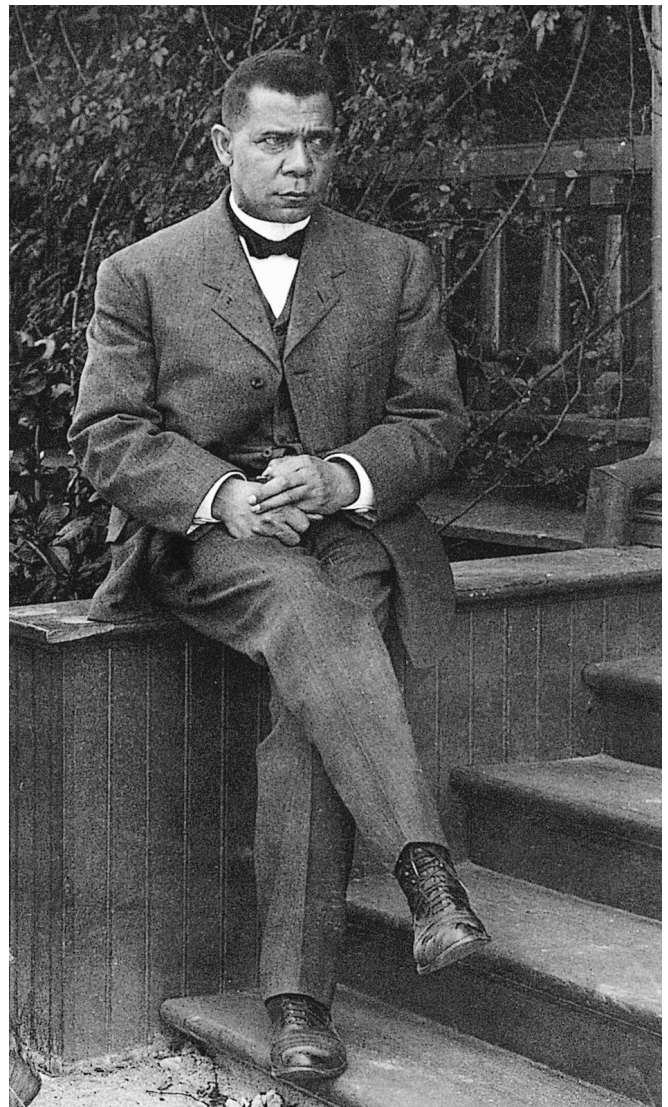
# BOOKER T. WASHINGTON IN ENGLAND, 1899

BY MARIKA SHERWOOD

Not long ago I began to search local newspapers that are online for the word 'negro', as I had decided that I must begin to unearth the history of Africans here in East Kent. Much came up, including an article on Booker T. Washington. I had learned when I was working on my book on Henry Sylvester Williams, the organiser of the first Pan-African Conference, that he had discussed the calling of this Conference with Washington, when he was visiting England in 1899. This newspaper article indicated that Washington had travelled around England. So I thought I should read about this visit as I hoped that it would introduce me to other Black activists/organisations.

*So who was Booker T Washington and why did he come to England?*

By 1899 Washington was a very well-known man in the USA. He had developed the Tuskegee Normal and



Booker T. Washington

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Industrial Institute, where both men and women were taught – and practised – trades. Washington believed that by providing skills needed by all, African Americans would gain full participation in society by acting as ‘responsible, reliable’ Americans. His aims were very different from those of W.E.B. DuBois, who campaigned for university level education for the top ‘Talented Tenth’ in order for them to gain this ‘full participation’.

In what became the USA, the enslaved had been freed when the Civil War ended in 1865, but ‘Negroes’ needed much support to establish new lives and attain equality. So some came to the UK seeking help and support against the innumerable forms of discrimination. They were well received, especially by those who had campaigned against the trade in enslaved Africans and then for the ending of slavery. Many attended public meetings in the support of these now free ‘Negroes’ – today ‘African Americans’.

Just to give one example for the late 19th century: in 1894 (April – June) Ida B Wells toured much of England and Scotland seeking support against discrimination and emphasised the ongoing lynchings. She was well received everywhere and was a very popular speaker. Again, giving just one example: she gave 35 talks in London, then twelve talks in

Manchester: “three were drawing room meetings in the homes of as many of Manchester’s wealthy citizens. One was in the town hall, three in churches and five in public halls.” Ms Wells does not mention meeting any ‘Black’ people during her travels here, but she does report that “Here a ‘coloured’ person can ride in any sort of conveyance in any part of the country without being insulted; stop in any hotel or be accommodated at any restaurant... Wander into any picture gallery..., concert hall... and receive only the most courteous treatment from officials and fellow sightseers.”

Given reports such as this by Ida B. Wells, it is hardly surprising that Booker T. Washington accepted the offer of a holiday in Europe with his wife, funded by his colleagues, who were noticing his exhaustion. The very active abolitionist Francis Garrison made all the arrangements for the Washingtons’ travel, introducing them to supporters in the UK.

*The Washingtons’ Travels in Europe and England:*

Washington reports on his travel with his wife Margaret in his autobiography *Up from Slavery*: they arrived in Antwerp on May 20, 1899

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and 'travelled through Holland and Belgium to Paris', where the University Club of Paris invited him to give a talk at a banquet, 'presided by the American Ambassador... (He) invited (us) to attend a reception at his residence... From Paris we went to London.... And reached London early in July'.

According to Louis Harlan, Washington's biographer, on July 3 'a group of Garrison's Unitarian friends held a public meeting to welcome the Washingtons to London... He met there black men from Africa, the West Indies and the United States...' The American Ambassador chaired the meeting, which was '... largely attended. There were many distinguished persons present, among them several members of Parliament... Throughout our stay in London Ambassador Choate was most kind and attentive to us... We were the guests several times of Mrs T. Fisher Unwin.' 'The substance of what I said was widely circulated in England and telegraphed to the American Press...' Usually referred to us 'a coloured gentleman', most British newspapers report on his many talks.

*Does the presence of the USA's ambassador at so many of the Washingtons' meetings indicate that the US feared that Washington's statements might increase the ongoing problems between the USA and the UK?*

*Choate's 'six years in London were marked by several notable diplomatic achievements... Thanks to Choate's work, Britain decided that maintaining good relations with the United States was paramount.'*

Washington then relates that they attended 'the International Congress of Women... [we all went] to see Queen Victoria at Windsor Castle'. Their interest in women is confirmed by their visit to the Agricultural College for Women in Swanley. 'In the House of Commons, which I visited several times, we met Sir Henry M. Stanley...and after my interview with him I became more convinced than ever that there was no hope of the American Negro's improving his condition by emigrating to Africa... All Europe, especially England, France and Germany – has been running a mad race for the last twenty years, to see which could gobble up the greater part of Africa, and there is practically nothing left.... I found out that in many cases the Negroes are treated by the Europeans in Africa almost as badly as they have ever been treated in the States'.

*At the House of Commons, did Washington meet Mancherjee Bhownaggee, the second India-born MP? Bhownaggee would have introduced him to the 'various Indian societies many of which' had been founded by him and Dadabhai Naoroji, who had been an MP*

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*from 1892 till 1895. What does it indicate about the attitudes of Washington's hosts that apparently he was not introduced to these politicians and organisations?*

'Mrs Washington and I were invited to attend a reception given by the Duke and Duchess of Sutherland at Stafford House ... There must have been at least three hundred persons at this reception...' Then he was 'the principal speaker at the Commencement exercises of the Royal College for the Blind ...the presiding officer was the Duke of Westminster... he thanked me heartily.'

On 22 June the Washingtons attended the Annual General Meeting of the Aborigines' Protection Society. They visited the Anti-Slavery Society in July; the Ambassador was also there. As far as I have been able to discover, neither of these societies had any 'Black' members. Nor were the societies much concerned about the treatment of 'Black' peoples, or 'coloured' seamen in the UK, or in the newly acquired colonies. Though invited, the Society did not attend the 1900 Pan-African Conference; nor did it provide financial support, though it had been asked to do so.

Aborigines' Friend, November, 18. The Society had been set up in 1837 to protect the 'human rights' of indigenous peoples and to ensure that they would be 'civilised' by European organisations.

The Washingtons did meet with one 'Black' organisation. Trinidad-born Henry Sylvester Williams had written to Washington from London in September 1898, advising him of the formation of the African Association, and its aims and activities; then asked Washington to speak at the Pan-African Conference planned for 1900. On 12 June Washington attended the Association's meeting organising the Conference and was elected a patron of the Association. On 15 July he sent a long report of this meeting to the Indianapolis Freeman: 'The English colonial system brings each year hundreds of representatives of all races and colour to London.... I beg to advice as many of our people as can possibly do so to attend this conference...going to be of one of the most effective and far reaching gathering that has ever been held in connection with the development of the race...' He did not return to the UK to attend the Conference.

The Washingtons then travelled to Birmingham: 'We were the guests for several days of Mr Joseph Sturge ....Sturge gave us a reception.... At which we met many of the prominent citizens of Birmingham.' Then on to Bristol, where they stayed 'for a few days' with three women who were very active in the anti-slavery movement. 'We both spoke in the Town Hall there ...[and] at the Women's Liberal Club... And at the Commencement exercise of the Royal College for the Blind.'



Henry Sylvester Williams

In his *The Story of My Life and Work* Washington states that he visited Manchester and Liverpool. But no mention of the Muslim Institute and the mosque in Liverpool. After all, this indicates a relatively large Muslim population. No mention of the African Training Institute either: at Colwyn Bay, not far from Liverpool, which was somewhat similar to his Tuskegee Institute, as it 'combined education as missionaries with practical training as artisans'. It had '18 students from all over West and central Africa in 1899'.

Then, 'for nearly a week, we were the guests of the daughter of John Bright, now Mrs Clark, of Street'. Did they visit Catherine Impey, who lived there? Anti-Caste, the paper she published (1888-1895), campaigned mainly against racism in the USA and the British empire. Both Ida B Wells and Frederick Douglass had visited her.

*Did the Washingtons meet any Black activists other than Williams?*

The African Association, which he had set up in 1897, had a number of Black officers.

*Did they visit any 'Black' organisations?*

He should have gone to Edinburgh to visit the Afro-West Indian Literary Society and the Indian Association at the University there! As in 1904 the Ethiopian Association was formed in Edinburgh and the Ethiopian Progressive Association was formed in Liverpool, there must have been political activists in both cities.

*Was Washington's interest not broad enough to visit/contact the British Committee of the Indian National Congress, which campaigned for the 'co-rulership of India with Britain'? Or did his hosts not even consider introducing him to such organisations?*

So newspaper readers all over the UK learned much from, and about, the 'most influential coloured citizen in the United States', and the work of his

Institute to deal with the conditions faced by 'Negroes' there.

*Did the Washingtons learn about the conditions faced by the Black population here? Or did they just presume that as they had been welcomed and as there were no obvious 'Jim Crow' (segregation) laws, 'negroes' were well treated in the UK even if they were very badly treated in the colonies, as he had acknowledged?*

### **The 'Black' population c. 1899:**

(By 'Black' I am referring to people of African or Asian heritage)

There were 'Black' populations in most major cities. 'The majority of black people...lived very hard lives.....' Most were seamen had been employed in the colonies, as merchant ships needed more crew, at least partly because so many of the British seamen had succumbed to various diseases – or deserted. And they were paid much less, given less living space and less food than their 'white' colleagues doing the same work! Historian Peter Fryer noted that once discharged when they docked in the UK, the 'seamen found it hard to get another ship, harder still to find work ashore. Most white seamen rejected them as shipmates [as did] white dockers... Destitute seamen tramped from port to port, desperate for work...' There were attempts to repatriate the 'starving workless', but West Indian authorities 'often refused

to let them to back.' The numbers must have been quite high as the government in London set up a parliamentary inquiry: the Committee on Distressed Colonial and Indian Subjects, which reported in 1910.

There has been no real enquiry into the Black population at this time. Some glimpses can be found in newspaper reports: for example, in the Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser of 24 November 1899, there is a report of a court case in 'Bedford Police-court against an African negro...for obtaining a bicycle without paying for it.... The accused was remanded.' (Apart from newspapers, all local parish records, court records, workhouse records should be searched).

But even 'civilised' Africans were not treated well in the colonies. Historian Douglas Lorimer reports on prejudices now experienced by qualified Africans applying to join the civil service once they returned home. For example, Gold Coast-born Oxford-educated and Lincoln's Inn qualified lawyer Joseph Renner Maxwell reported that 'a Colonial Office ordinance had reduced him to the status of "native", and thus discriminated against him in the government service'. This issue was reported by many others, for example by another barrister, West Indian D. G. Garraway, who also noted 'the reluctance of the Anti-Slavery Society itself to take up the problems of racial prejudice and discrimination'. Lorimer

concludes that 'by 1882 the Society's resolve (against racial discrimination) had deteriorated into apathy.' Though invited, the Society did not attend the 1900 Pan-African Conference; nor did it provide financial support, though it had been asked to do so.

*What were the British attitudes to non-famous 'Black' people at that time?*

Most historians report that racial attitudes were changed by the Europeans' division of Africa among themselves. Under colonialism there could be no slavery, but Africans had to be kept under strict control to ensure that they did not rebel and that they did whatever they were told to do, whether they were paid or not paid: for example, to produce agricultural products for export, build roads, buildings, et al. For example, 1,000 tons of cocoa and 14,000 tons of palm oil were imported from Ghana and Nigeria 1899-1901. The British government replaced its Slave Trade Department with the Africa Department, part of whose job must have been to ensure that this new and growing commerce would help 'civilize' its colonies.

Historian Christine Bolt argues that 'by the 1860s, the upper and middle class of the English people, especially the latter, had come to believe that Negroes were innately inferior... Not even British abolitionists and

missionaries were free from cultural arrogance and colour prejudice...' Douglas Lorimer also reports on the development of 'condescending paternalism' by those who had fought for abolition.

*So how did these racist attitudes develop?*

Education for children aged 5 to 10 became compulsory in 1880, but some had to pay fees until 1897. Now British children could be – had to be – educated about this growing empire. Historian James Walvin reports that the 'world of empire loomed large in the teaching... British children were taught not simply the facts of empire, but urged to glory in it. They learned to be proud of the homeland, but often in terms that were suffused with ideals of racial superiority... British industries and "civilisation" were described as proof of British superiority... the British had come to accept that in the racial hierarchy of mankind, they stood supreme.' Much was 'glossed over', reports historian John MacKenzie, 'like the Civil War, the slave trade, and times of sexual licence, while patriotism, militarism, adulation of the monarchy, and of course imperial expansion came to be the central concerns'.

Not only children, but the whole population had to be (mis-)educated. Another form of education was the many exhibitions and shows featuring Africans; for example, Saartjie

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Baartman, labelled as the 'Hottentot Venus', was exhibited in 1810; the 'Caffre War chiefs' in 1851; 'Savage South Africa' toured Britain in 1899. According John MacKenzie "native villages" were enduring features of all exhibitions from 1870... to show off the quaint, the savage, the exotic, to offer living proof of the onward march of imperial civilisation'. Music historian Michael Pickering reports that for example, 'the Birmingham Morning News not only referred to "exhibitions evoking images of circus savages, but also described Fisk songs as "specimens of a kind of art developed amongst a people of a semi-barbaric race brought into contact with the more cultivated"'.

Innumerable minstrel shows toured the country. Originally 'Negroes' from the USA, their popularity led to 'white' entertainers/musicians 'blacking up' with burnt cork, presenting shows supposedly about real Black lives, but in fact 'conveyed a comic derogatory stereotype of blacks.... In 1887 Frederick Douglass blamed the minstrel shows for the increased racial intolerance that he encountered.' Simon Featherstone analyses these shows as providing 'examples of "natives" who as "half devils" and "half children" were in need of colonial subjection... [They] linked the racial ideologies underpinning empire to domestic, economic and class divisions.' There were also plays sending the same message, as reported

by Hazel Waters: '...the stereotype of the black...are the outward and visible signs of the growth and development of racism as a coherent and structured ideology... the black image became shorn of... almost of human qualities' There was also a huge social class division in Britain. The wage paid to most workers, whether women or men, barely paid for enough food. It is therefore not surprising that many emigrated: between 1891 and 1900 1,282,900 people left their 'mother country'. 'Blacks were the members of the lowest segment of society.... condescending paternalism' developed including among the abolitionists, who had fought for abolition... Blacks in the UK were now 'the lowest segments of society'.

*So Washington did not introduce me to anyone I had not met before. But I certainly learned about the development of racist attitudes in Britain. And that we have to do much more research about the presence of Africans in the UK at the end of the 19th century. Also about school curricula and the training of teachers.*

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### Further reading:

#### Primary Sources:

Most newspapers (including in Dublin), report on Booker T. Washington – When Choate is present at a meeting the papers give him much more space than to Washington, search for him on [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk).

The Royal Archives sent me this from the Queen's journals, entry for 7 July 1899: '.... I saw in the Quadrangle, headed by Lady Aberdeen, about 180 women of all nations, from India & from the Colonies, who have been having a Congress in London.' (Correspondence with the Archives, February 2020.)

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Jonathan Schneer, 'Anti-Imperial London', in Gretchen Holbrook Gerzina (ed), *Black Victorians/Black Victoriana*, (Rutgers University Press, 2003), p.176. (numbers and payrates on p.233).

Jonathan Schneer, *London 1900: The Imperial Metropolis*, (Yale Univ. Press, 1999), p.185

James Walvin, *Victorian Values*, (Sphere Books, 1987), pp.93, 116

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For more on the Washington's travels in Europe, see Louis R. Harlan, Booker T.

Washington: *The making of a Black leader*, (Oxford University Press, 1972), pp.238-241.

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Emigrants were helped, eg by the Salvation Army, and East End Emigration Fund; the government offered 'subsidised passage' and/or free land in its colonies:

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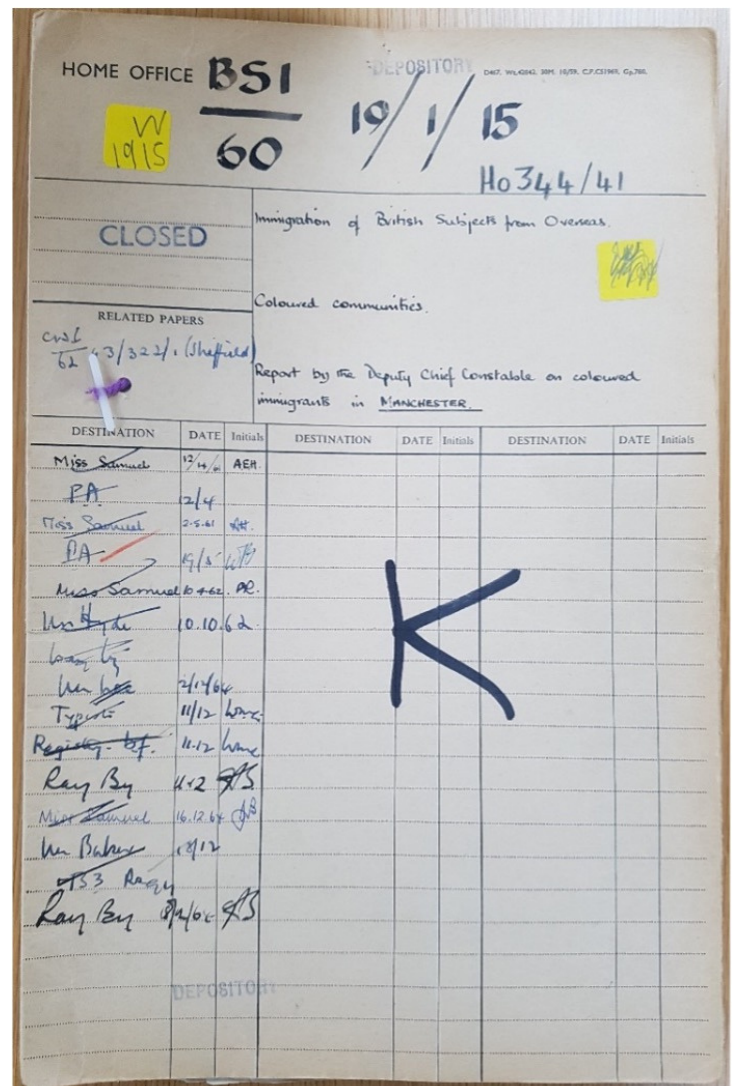
See also: Laurence Fenton, "I Was Transformed"; Frederick Douglass An American Slave in Victorian Britain, (Amberley Publishing, 2018); Paul Jefferson (ed), *The Travels of William Wells Brown*, (Marcus Wiener Publishing, 1991).

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Marika Sherwood is a pioneering Historian and author, who has written extensively on the history of African and Caribbean people in Britain. Sherwood co-founded the Black and Asian Studies Association (BASA), and is the former editor of the BASA newsletter.

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The file (TNA HO 344/41) can be ordered and viewed at The National Archives, [here](#). It's also worth viewing the broader HO 344 record series (HO, meaning Home Office) which “deal[s] with legislative, policy, administrative and social matters relating to immigration from the British Colonies...” for further relevant files. See also, Caballero, Chamion and Aspinall, Peter J. *Mixed Race Britain in the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018) pp. 340-343, for a more detailed discussion of the report.

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AFRICANS													WEST INDIANS													INDIANS & PAKISTANIS													OTHERS													SCHEDULE OF CHILDREN IN MANCHESTER WITH ONE COLOURED PARENT												
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# COLONIAL BRITAIN'S SECRET SURVEILLANCE OF THE PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY OF GUYANA'S LEADERS IN BRITAIN IN 1953

BY CLAUDIA TOMLINSON

The use of intelligence services was an important strategy employed by Britain to suppress anti-colonialism in the Caribbean. Arguably, this is most clearly seen in Britain's overthrow of the democratically elected government of British Guiana in 1953. Periodic declassification of secret service documents provide a useful source of primary historical data for the retrospective scrutiny of British government policy, and activities in its former colonies. This discussion considers an archival record held in the British National Archives. It is part of a suite of records declassified in 2011, and documents the activities of British intelligence agencies' surveillance of Cheddi Jagan, and Forbes Burnham, the deposed leaders of the British Guiana government in 1953.

British Guiana was a former colony which gained independence in 1966, after which it became known as

Guyana. Located on the northern coast of South America, bordered by Brazil and Venezuela, it was developed as a plantation economy by successive European nations, producing sugar, rice, and other crops for export. The population was largely constituted of enslaved Africans, their descendants, indentured workers from a number of nations, but predominantly from India, and white Europeans. The First Nations or indigenous peoples, known generically as Amerindians, were there first, but numerically now represent a small part of the population. Political enfranchisement was held by wealthy landowners, mostly white and 'coloured' or mixed/creole males until the 1953 general election, the first election in which the vote was universal. British Guiana developed as a highly racialised society. Political and economic power developed during the nation formation and has

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remained a toxic and turbulent part of national life since. Discussions of the development of British Guiana society has been well documented by scholars.

Resistance and rebellion against British rule, the economic impact of European wars, and the economic crash of 1929, intensified in the 1930s. Strikes, demonstrations and uprisings, particularly focused on Georgetown the capital city, drove the emergence of new political directions. Trade unionism, the rise of communism in the Soviet Union after 1917 and its pledge to support the liberation of black people with an anti-colonial programme, fed into the emergence of new political consciousness. Cheddi Jagan (1918 – 1997), the son of former Indian indentured workers returned to British Guiana in 1934, from the USA where he had qualified as a dentist, with a dream to lead British Guiana to freedom. He had married Janet Jagan (1920 – 2009), a white American dental nurse who was a committed Marxist, and she joined her husband in what was to become a high-profile political journey over many decades. Forbes Burnham (1923 – 1985) was an ambitious British-educated lawyer of African origin, who returned to British Guiana following his education. He joined forces with Cheddi Jagan to form the People's Progressive Party (PPP), with a programme of anti-colonialism and essentially to form a multi-racial

coalition prioritising the freedom from colonial rule and the uplifting of the working people.

In the 1953 general election, held in April, the PPP won an overwhelming victory, succeeding in 18 out of 24 seats. This victory was short-lived as the British Government declared in October 1953 that the PPP government was dangerous and seeking to establish a communist state, and suspended the Constitution. British troops were sent to British Guiana and a four-year period of repression was introduced, with a declared State of Emergency and martial law imposed. Many of the PPP leaders and activists were imprisoned for breach of the new regulations, for example by meeting with others, holding demonstrations, printing and written communications, and restriction orders requiring them not to leave defined geographic locations. Cheddi and Janet Jagan were imprisoned, along with other leading PPP officials including Rory Westmaas, Eric Huntley and Eusi Kwayana. This intervention by Britain is often associated with the creation of political instability in Guyana that has endured into the contemporary period.

In October 1953, Jagan and Burnham travelled to Britain to protest the suspension of the Constitution and inform the British public of the impact of the crisis. The records of security services surveillance of this

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visit inform us of the repression enacted against British Guiana through the use of security services operations as a weapon of repression. The arrival of the Guyanese leaders was noted by security services, with the stated priority of identifying justification for the suspension of the Constitution,

particularly any association with the British Communist Party, and other Communist leaders. This was achieved through the interception and opening of the leaders correspondence, and the tapping of their telephone calls (Extracts 1 and 2).

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SECRET. 22.10.53

To THE POSTMASTER-GENERAL, and all others whom it may concern,

I hereby authorize and require you to detain, open and produce for my inspection all postal packets and telegrams addressed to;— and emanating from:—

Dr. Cheddi JAGAN,  
L.F.S. BURNHAM,  
The Royal Hotel,  
Woburn Place, London, W.C.1.

or to any name at that or any other address if there is reasonable ground to believe that they are intended for the said Dr. Cheddi JAGAN and L.F.S. BURNHAM

and for so doing this shall be your sufficient Warrant.

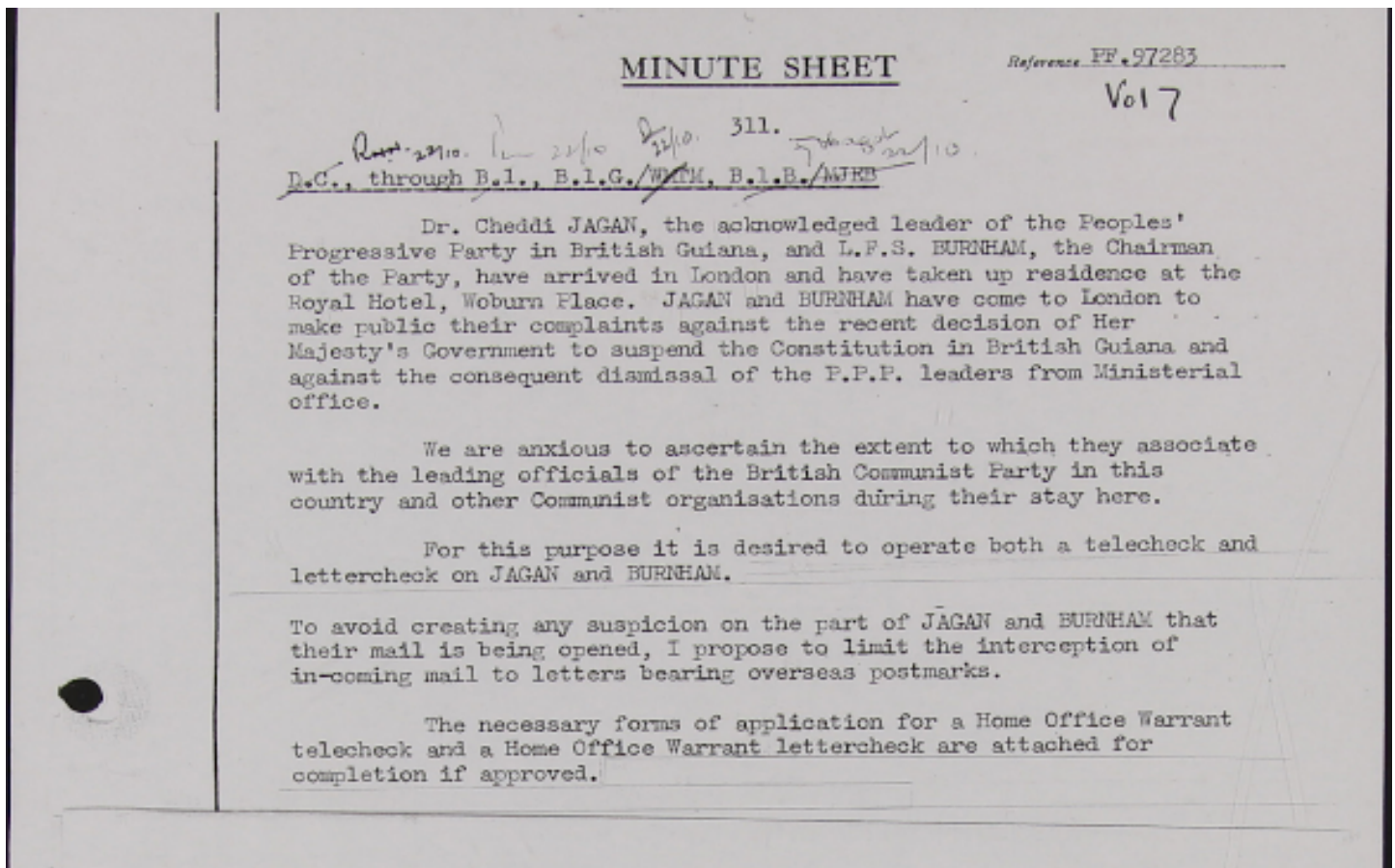
These persons are leading members of the Peoples' Progressive Party of British Guiana, which is known to have close connections with Communist organisations here and in Eastern Europe. It is desired to have access to correspondence addressed to, and emanating from, both men in order to ascertain the extent to which they are in touch with Communist elements during their stay here.

One of His Majesty's  
Principal Secretaries of State.

S. Form 56.  
FF.97,283/B.1.B.

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Extract 1: Order authorising the interception of correspondence of Jagan and Burnham



Extract 2: Plan for letter check of Jagan and Burnham at the Royal Park Hotel, London.

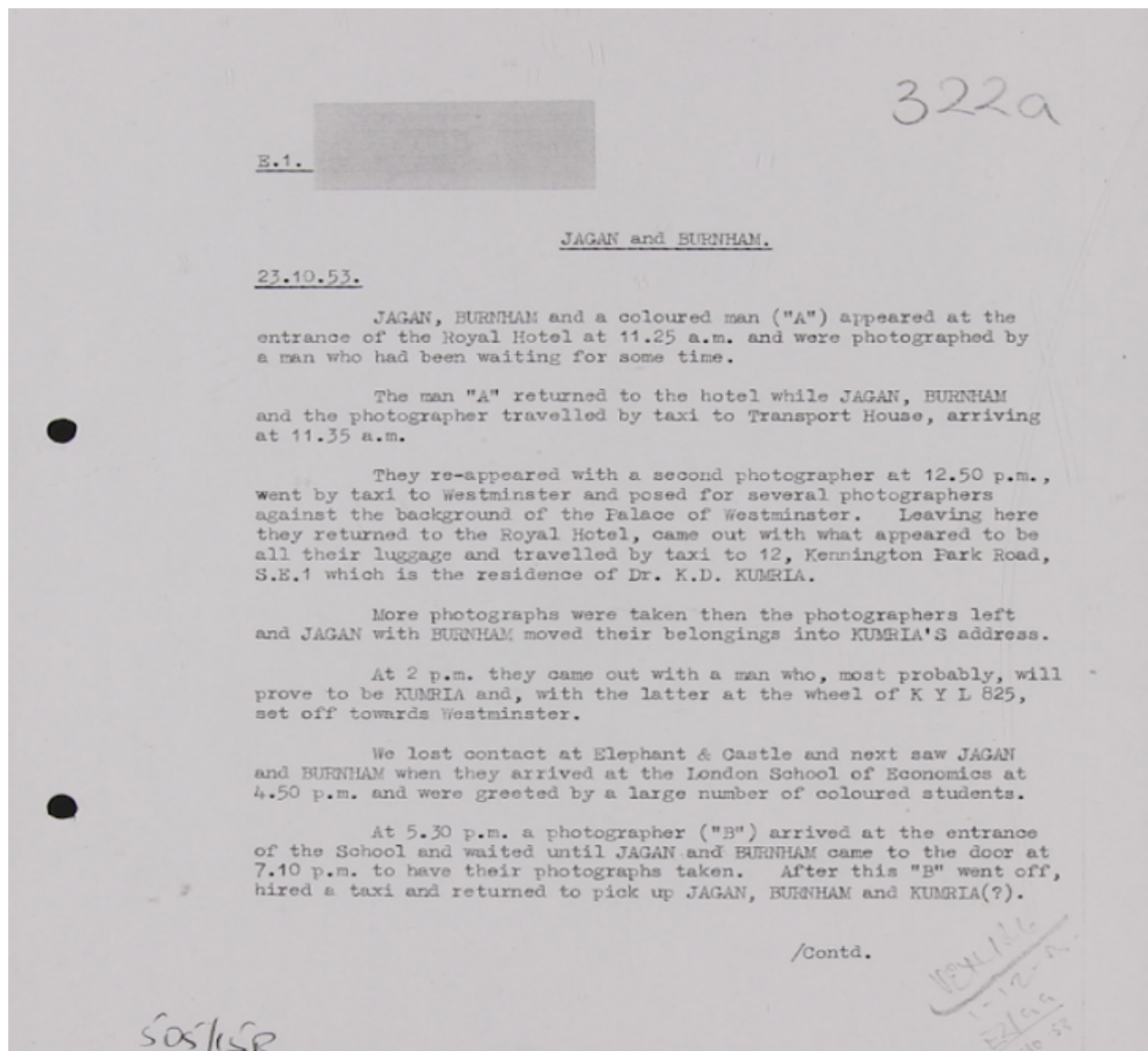
Jagan and Burnham's visit attracted strong media interest. They were photographed and filmed wherever they went, underlining the success of the purpose of their visit. Far from holding secretive meetings with the Communist Party or others deemed of interest to British security services, this document shows that the leaders were, in fact, very much in the public eye. They attended high profile venues such as the London School of Economics (Extract 3). This visit also informs of the presence of black students in Britain during this period, and their level of interest in, and knowledge of the activities of Britain

in its colonies. They turned out in large numbers to hear the British Guiana leaders speak (Extract 2). The security services tried to anticipate the leaders' movements, and simultaneously covered potential venues including their accommodation in London and the House of Commons. They also sought access to the leader's speech at Holborn Hall, a public venue (Extract 7). The British Guiana debate, to determine whether Britain had been justified in suspending the Constitution, was held in the House of Commons on 22 October 1953. The security services operated a



surveillance exercise in the public gallery, but found it a 'hopeless' effort to identify whether the leaders were there because the gallery was packed out by 'many coloured men' (Extract 6). It is of interest that the crisis in Guiana generated so much interest in Britain among the black population, presumably the Caribbean student population, but perhaps the wider migrant community as well. This description also provides a picture of

the pre-dominance of black men in the political activism in Britain at this time; there is an invisibility of women, either in actual numbers or failure to acknowledge the presence of black women in the Commons' gallery. The surveillance at the House of Commons did not bear fruit, and in fact, Cheddi Jagan was at Holborn Hall making a speech rather than in the Commons' gallery. Updates on the Parliamentary debate were announced periodically to the audience at Holborn Hall.

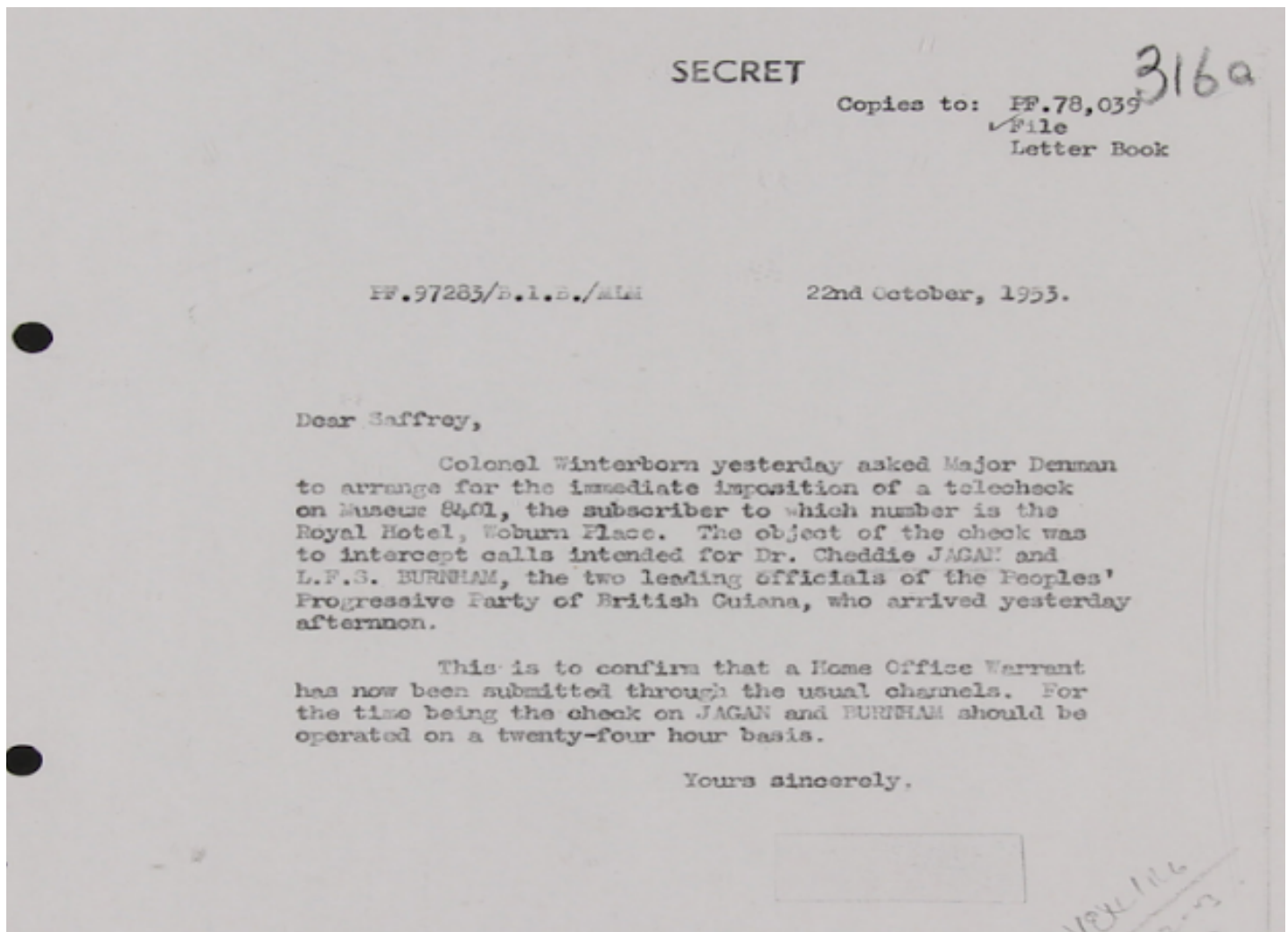


Extract 3: Security services record of following or 'tailing' of Jagan and Burnham, in London.

It is not known the extent to which private organisations such as the Royal Hotel co-operated with the security services in the surveillance of the leaders. This co-operation, which may have been legally required would presumably have been necessary to facilitate aspects of the surveillance. It is noteworthy that they stayed at the Royal Hotel for a short period, prior to moving to the private home of an associate Dr K.D Kumria. Kumria was the General Secretary of the Council for Indians Abroad and founder of

Swaraj House, a meeting place for Indian political activism in London. He was also an associate of George Padmore.

It is unclear whether Jagan and Burnham were aware of the surveillance, but that is probable given that they both completed higher education and professional training in Western countries. They were subjects of surveillance by British security services in British Guiana for several years prior to the general election of 1953.

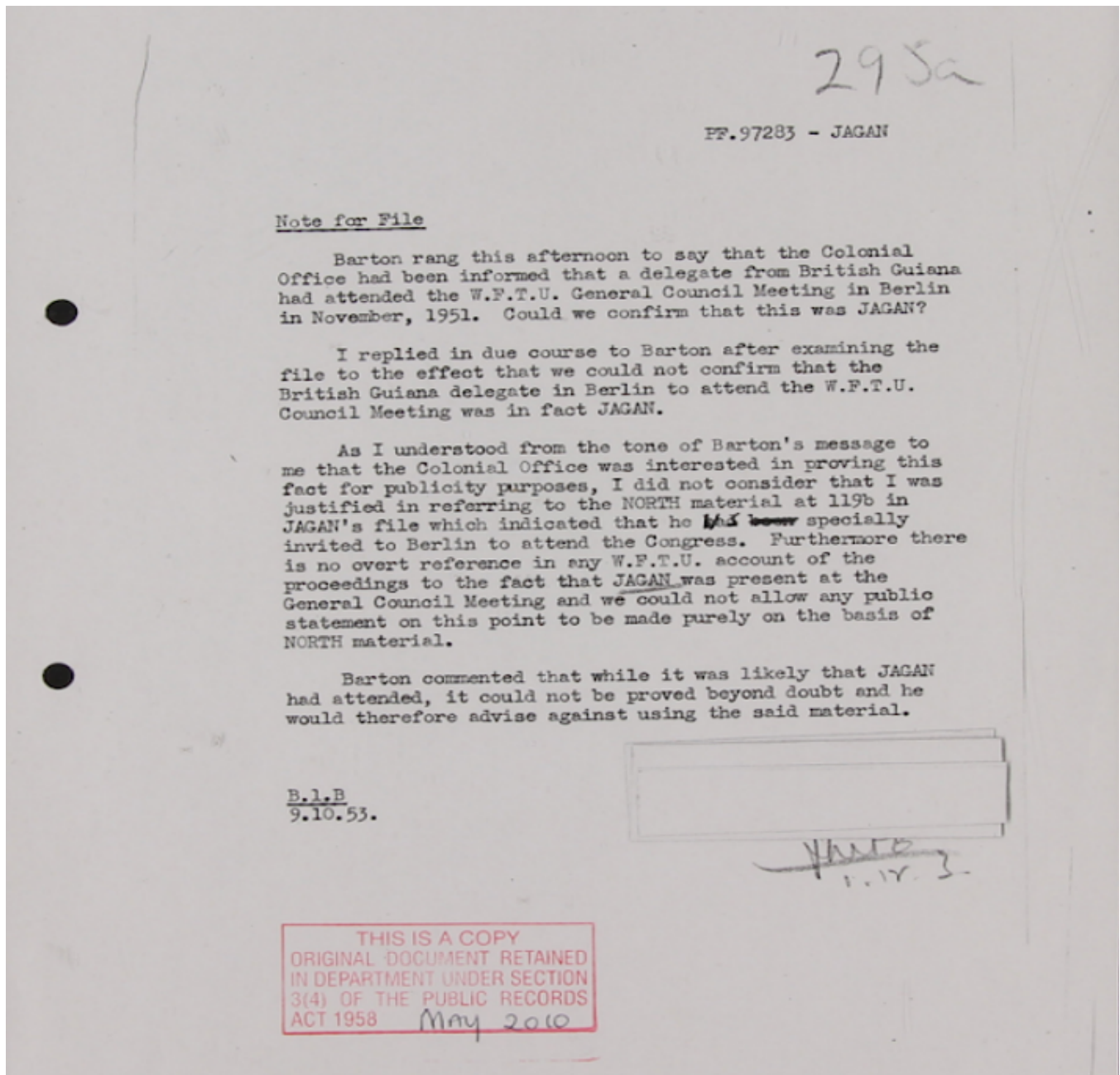


Extract 4: Order for interception of calls to Jagan and Burnham at the Royal Hotel, London.

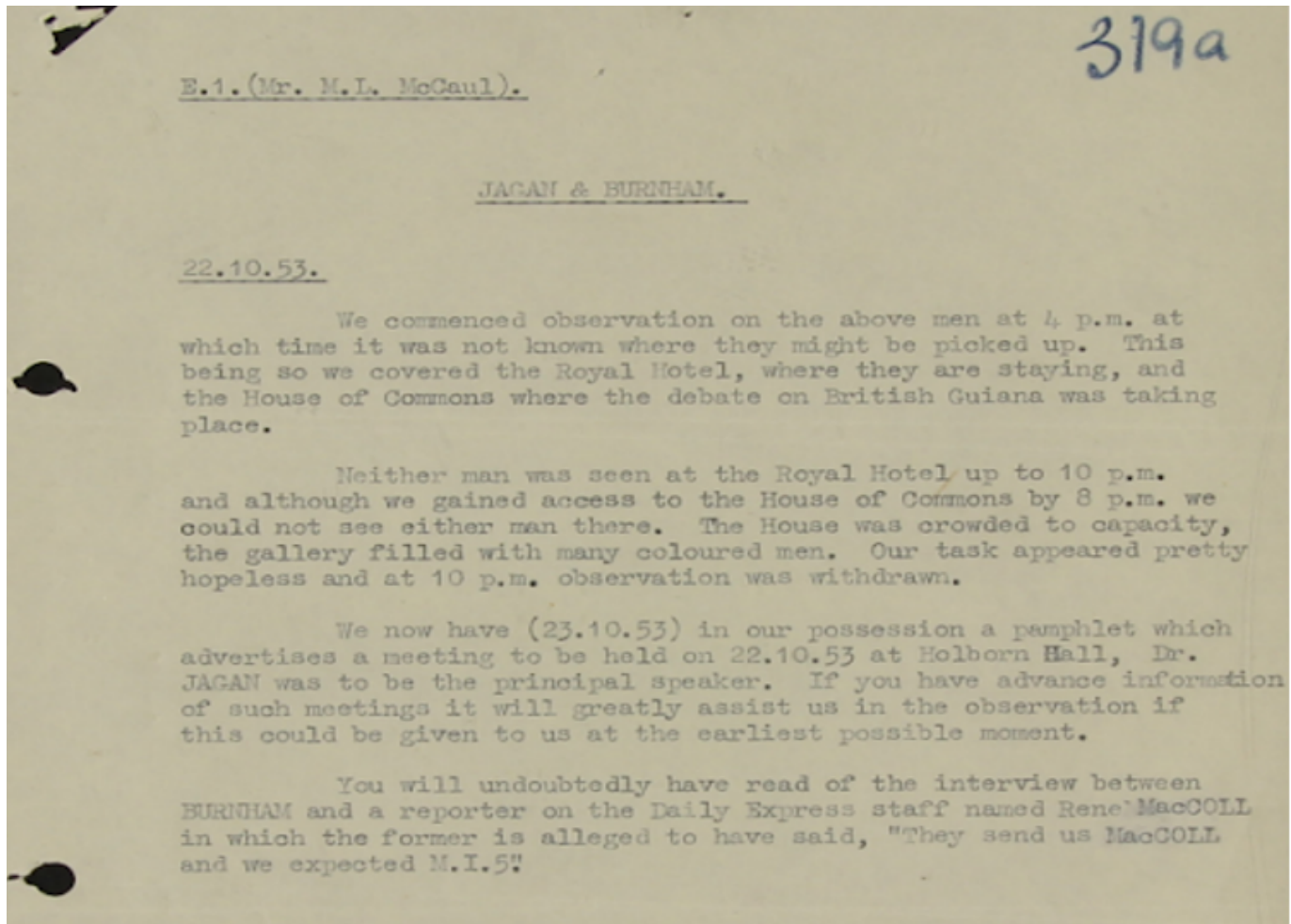


During the leaders' stay in Britain, the security services also conducted enquiries about their involvement and affiliation with earlier trade union activism in Eastern European communist states. The World Federation of Trade Unions held a conference in Berlin in 1951 with a delegate from British Guiana. The

security services tried to ascertain whether this was Jagan, to provide evidence of his dangerous communist affiliation, and justification for the repression. They hoped to use this information for 'publicity purposes', indicating the great pressure to discredit the political reputation of Jagan (Extract 5).



Extract 5: Investigating Jagan links to World Federation of Trade Unions

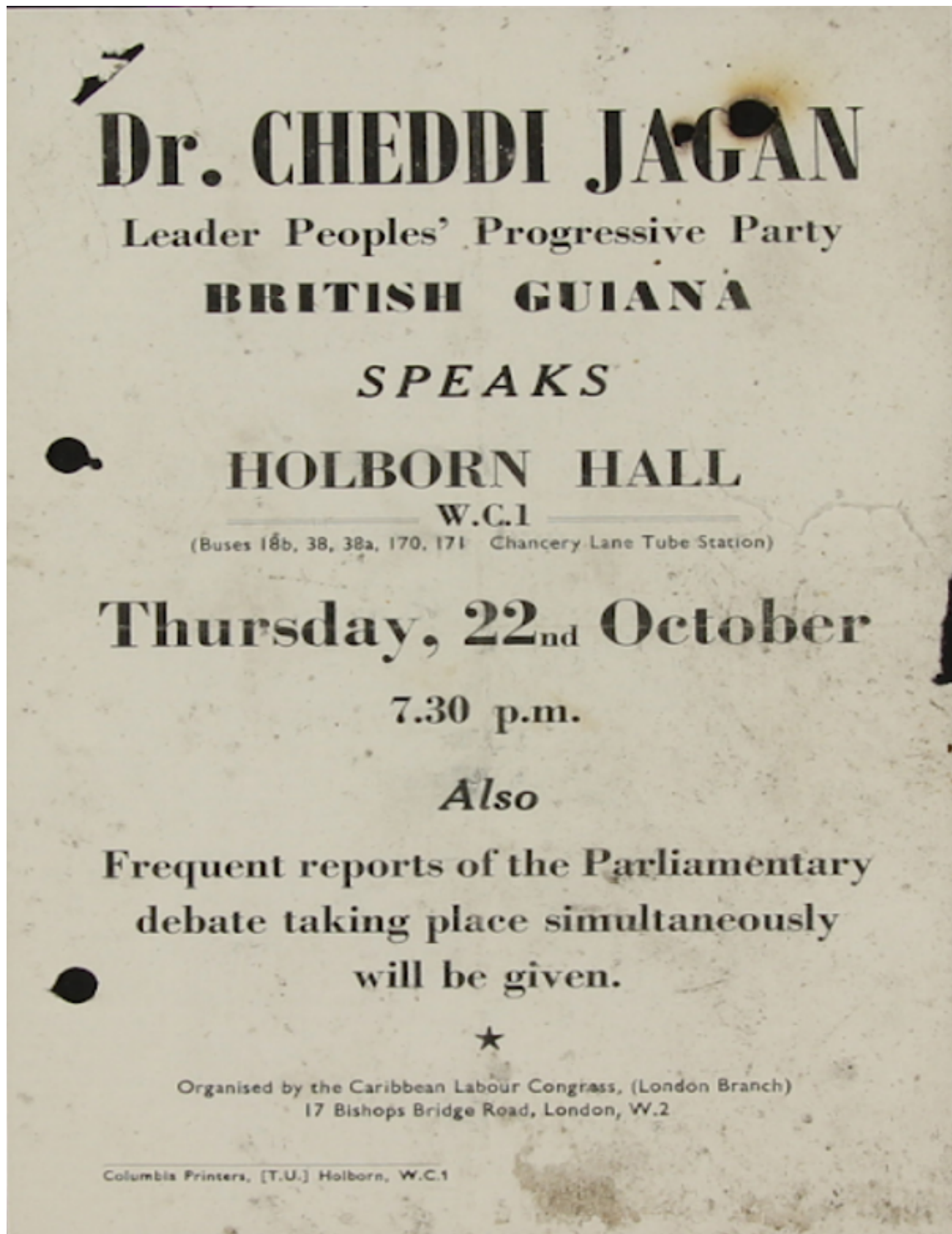


Extract 6: Surveillance at the Public Gallery at House of Commons

The records of the British security services form a valuable part of the history of colonial activity in the Caribbean, and documentary evidence of forms of resistance. The records discussed in this paper, focusing on the case of Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham's 1953 visit to London provides additional data to study how Britain utilised its secret services to maintain its interests in its Empire. The paucity of evidence in these records to justify its claim that Jagan and Burnham were planning to turn British Guiana into a communist state underlines fear mongering about communist ideology,

which was important to all black activists at the time. The Communist Party that had a clear anti-colonial perspective, that vowed to assist in the black struggle against colonialism and oppression of workers. These records are also important because of activity to ensure their destruction and to erase evidence of British colonial crimes.

The intensification in concern for uncovering truths about black history and the black struggle in the wake of the murder of George Floyd places an added imperative on scholars, and others, to seek to fully document black history and explore records such as those presented in this discussion.



**Dr. CHEDDI JAGAN**  
Leader Peoples' Progressive Party  
**BRITISH GUIANA**  
*SPEAKS*  
**HOLBORN HALL**  
W.C.1  
(Buses 18b, 38, 38a, 170, 171 Chancery Lane Tube Station)  
**Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October**  
7.30 p.m.  
*Also*  
Frequent reports of the Parliamentary  
debate taking place simultaneously  
will be given.  
★  
Organised by the Caribbean Labour Congress, (London Branch)  
17 Bishops Bridge Road, London, W.2  
Columbia Printers, [T.U.] Holborn, W.C.1

Extract 7: Cheddi Jagan speech at Holborn Hall



## Further reading:

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'The Open University, Making Britain, Discover How South Asians Shaped the Nation (1870 - 1950), George Padmore | Making Britain', <http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/makingbritain/content/george-padmore>.

'The Open University, Swaraj House | Making Britain Discover How South Asians Shaped the Nation (1870 - 1950)', <http://www.open.ac.uk/researchprojects/makingbritain/content/swaraj-house>.

Claudia Tomlinson is a doctoral candidate at the University of Chichester, working on a research project about the political life of the late Black Radical activist, Jessica Huntley. Tomlinson's thesis is entitled: 'Jessica Huntley, A Political History of Radical Black Activism in British Guiana and Britain (1927 – 2013)'.

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# **PART 3: REVIEWS**



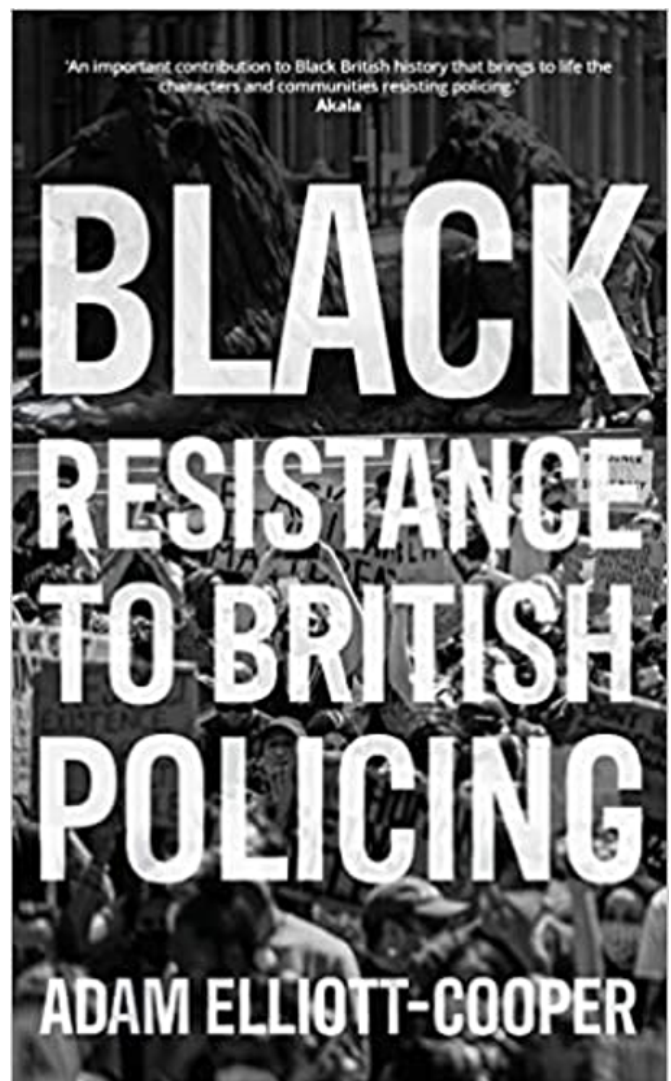
# BLACK RESISTANCE TO BRITISH POLICING

ADAM ELLIOTT-COOPER, (MANCHESTER:  
MANCHESTER UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2021)

BY CLAUDIA TOMLINSON

This book presents a chronological, transnational analysis of black resistance to oppressive British policing. It reminds us that black people globally, in the former British colonies, were subject to brutal policing in Africa, and the Caribbean nations, as well as in Britain. It points to a sometimes unrecognised truth that the connection between the black British experience of policing injustices is rooted in British imperialism and colonialism.

At first sight, I wondered what new analysis Elliott-Cooper would bring to the well documented cases of Kelso Cochrane, Joy Gardner, Cherry Groce, Cynthia Jarrett, Stephen Lawrence and Mark Duggan, the New Cross Massacre, and the 1980s and 2011 uprisings. But in fact, whilst these cases have been previously analysed, Elliot-Cooper provides the opportunity for a longitudinal lens to be applied which disrupts narratives



about isolated incidents, instead he lays bare the golden thread of the violent, over policing and over criminalisation of black people in Britain.

In addition, the author discusses many atrocities by the police that are not very well known such as the injustices that fuelled the work of the Black Parents Movement (BPM) which centred on case work fighting for black people, often young people, who had faced abuses at the hands of the police.

The centring of the activism of black women's contribution to pan-African and working people's resistance to oppression is very positively described in the book. Radical approaches in black studies still remains too patriarchal in perspective.

Elma Francois, founder of the National Workers Cultural and Social Association, Claudia Jones, Amy Ashwood Garvey, are discussed in relation to resisting British anti-blackness, bringing a transnational focus to the discussion which has been central to black activism. Apart from these iconic women, Elliot-Cooper also platforms the contribution of many more women activists such as Beverley Bryan, Stella Dadzie, Gee Bernard, Marcia Rigg, Carol Duggan providing generous and developed discussions of gender, feminism, and family in resistance. Some may find the most illuminating

and interesting section as that which relates to the 2011 uprisings, the political and community context, as a period that has not received as much academic attention as earlier or subsequent periods in oppressive policing. Drawing on his experience as a volunteer worker, and scholarly literature, Elliot-Cooper shows how the weight of policing has fallen hard on black males, driven by early 'moral panics' about the danger posed by black men.

The author concludes that the future fight against police oppression of black people is necessarily delivered through coalitions of all oppressed peoples. I would have liked to see the additional point made in his conclusion that liberation of all oppressed peoples cannot take place until black people are free from injustices, but I accept that may be implicit in his argument.

This book is a must-read for anyone wanting an overview of how black people have resisted the oppression and injustices of British policing. It is very accessible, and readable despite the use of scholarly literature throughout. The reader comes away, perhaps for the first time, with a cohesive, integrated impression of the use of policing as a weapon of oppression against black people by the British state and the strength of the resistance unleashed in response.

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Claudia Tomlinson is a doctoral candidate at the University of Chichester, working on a research project about the political life of the late Black Radical activist, Jessica Huntley. Tomlinson's thesis is entitled: 'Jessica Huntley, A Political History of Radical Black Activism in British Guiana and Britain (1927 – 2013)'.

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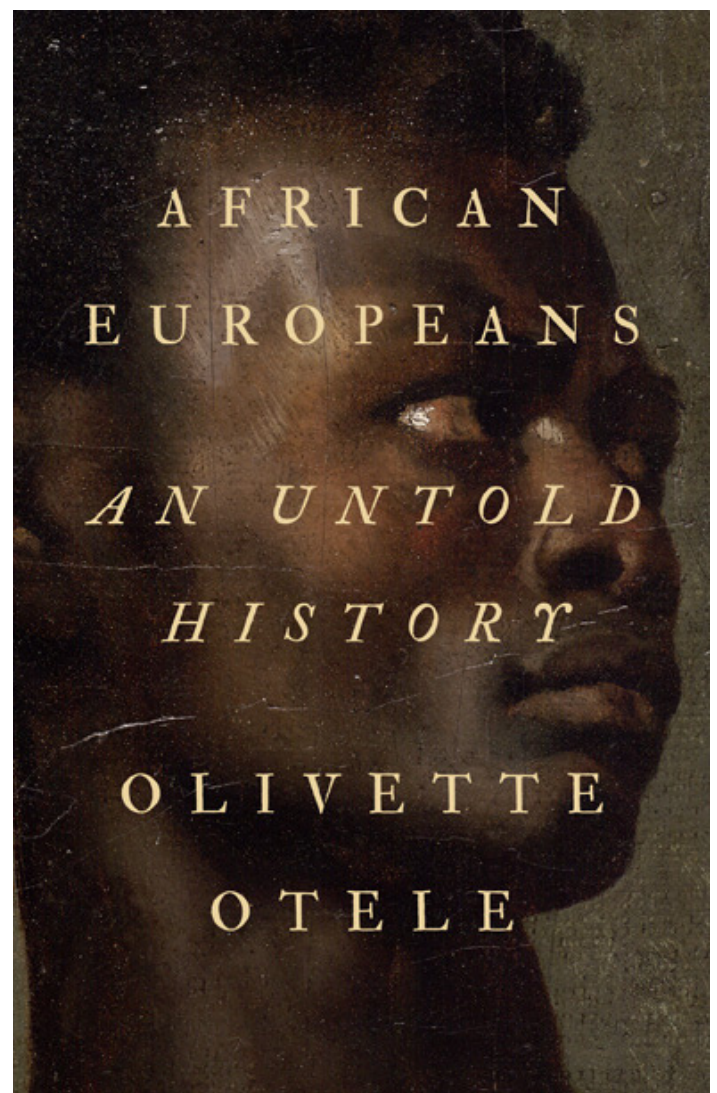
# AFRICAN EUROPEANS: AN UNTOLD HISTORY

OLIVETTE OTELE (LONDON: HURST & COMPANY, 2020)

BY MONTAZ MARCHÉ

For too long African histories of Europe have examined solely within national borders, particularly African histories relative to Spain, Portugal, Britain or the Netherlands. Yet Otele's *African Europeans: An Untold History* is a compact but still extensive monograph that embraces the transnational interconnectivity of the African diasporas' migration across Europe.

Over seven chapters, Otele recounts the story of European/African relations from 20BCE to present day, across various European states. Yet she utilises the powerful art of compassionate storytelling to illuminate African European history, by detailing the lives and histories of underrepresented African individuals in European history, immersing the reader in a history of not only African presence but experience. Within this book, Otele challenges the way African histories are told, looking



beyond the characteristic “infantilisation, exoticism, bestialism, distancing, exclusion and exceptionalism” that has defined many elements of African history in popular culture and in telling such intimate and important histories, she unveils an integrated history of African heritage, contribution, and racialisation in Europe, spanning across centuries.

The first two chapters of African Europeans centralises the Mediterranean world as a space of African European relations. Chapter one considers the enormous, interconnected history of interaction and relations between Europe and various African countries from 20BCE to the seventeenth century and how well-known individuals such as Emperor Septimius Severus or the lesser-known Benedict of Palermo, both notable figures in European political and religious institutions, came to define our understanding of early racialisation.

Interestingly, the chapters historical subjects possess distinct positions of authority that contrast to the variety of African presence illuminated in chapter two. Chapter two shifts from a closer focus on individuals to considering the African integration into racialised social hierarchies of sixteenth century Europe. Again, this chapters complexifies conversations of the emergence of racialisation between the classic antiquity and early modern period from a transnational perspective.

Chapter three establishes the evolution of racialisation in Europe through the transatlantic slave trade in the Netherlands particularly but also France and Britain, where the precedents of colonization, racial hierarchies and racial capitalism consolidated interactions between Africa and Europe. Yet Otele focalised the experience of dual heritage to demonstrate the blurred lines of racial hierarchy.

Chapter Four, with its eighteenth to nineteenth century focus centralised the role and perception of black women, specifically African European tradeswomen, using their stories to consider further the impact of dual heritage on African experiences in Europe from a generational, gendered and geographic perspective. Otele contemplates absences in collective memory in nation states and the erasure of links to slavery and colonial roots from national histories in chapter Five, distinctively centralising Brandenburg Prussia's colonial connections as a case study of what Otele describes as “historical amnesia”.

Finally, chapter Six and seven both reflect upon the lives of African people in Europe in twentieth century and present-day Europe and how the lives and histories of African people with respective European states has been marginalised and erased from national memory.

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Demonstrated through movement such as Afro-feminism in France and the Black Lives Matters Movement in Western Europe more broadly, Otele reintegrates African presence into various European states' national consciousness, whilst highlighting how the movements overall, demonstrate the transnational interconnectivity within the African diaspora in Europe, characterised by experiences of identity, heritage and memory in Chapter Six and through narratives of activism, liberation and anti-racism in Chapter Seven.

Indeed, *African Europeans* is a trailblazer on multiple fronts. It possesses clear cut category of analysis, examining as people of African heritage, bypassing the challenge of the term 'black' as an ambiguous racial identifier that across European history has encompasses different persons of colour of various origins, whilst allowing for the accurate representation of people who are solely African or of dual heritage.

The book satisfies expectations from its title by examining African presence and history in various nations across Europe, including Italy, Germany (and Prussia in its existence), The Netherlands, Sweden, Britain and more.

Moreover, by breaching the worlds of both academia and popular history, the book integrates important transnational narratives of African

history into the wider historical conversation, encouraging a wider engagement with core race theory concepts, particularly the idea that cultural, racial, and imperial histories are not and should not be confined to national borders, argued by theorists such as Paul Gilroy. At just over 200 words, the ambition of this book is also to be admired, overloading the reader with centuries of individual, communal and intersectional African histories analysed within their own space and time, whilst also engaging with important concepts of memorialisation, heritage, identity, oppression, and discourses on how historical narratives of African history have been and are told/controlled.

There are many notable conversations that this book engages with. However, Otele addresses a significant challenge of telling African European histories, the idea of exceptionalism. Otele defined exceptionalism in the context of *African Europeans*, as those "who have defied obscurity to be included in European accounts". This demarcation of exceptionalism is inevitable given the circumstances of everyone's lives and the detail noted within primary material about them. Yet Otele goes to significant efforts to illuminate the constructed identities behind each exceptional story and contextualise everyone's life in detail across various intersections, particularly race, gender, and class concurrently, all while narrating and

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testifying to developing ideas of race, racialism and racism from an empirical perspective.

She considers wider contexts for example, geographies, heritages/dual heritages, social positions, and the changing relations both within internal European societies and the relations between Europe and Africa and how all these themes can impact perceptions and the racialised experiences of the African subjects in Europe.

Furthermore, Otele counterbalances the exceptionalism of the well-known/well recorded individual with similarly intricate examinations of less well-known lives to demonstrate diversity and heterogeneity within the African diaspora in Europe.

This book more than fulfils its intent to be a "starting point" to a significant, vital, and illuminating conversation, encouraging the reader to be more expansive not only about the narrative framework with which African histories are structured within the European historical conversation but also to think expansively about our own place and relativity of African history within Europe.

I can only hope that "African European: An Untold History" is recognised in its position as one of many more histories to be told and historians/researcher/enthusiasts answer this call to arms.

Montaz Marché is a PhD researcher at the University of Birmingham, focusing on black women in eighteenth-century Britain. She is passionate about researching and expanding awareness of black British and gender history within the academy and beyond.

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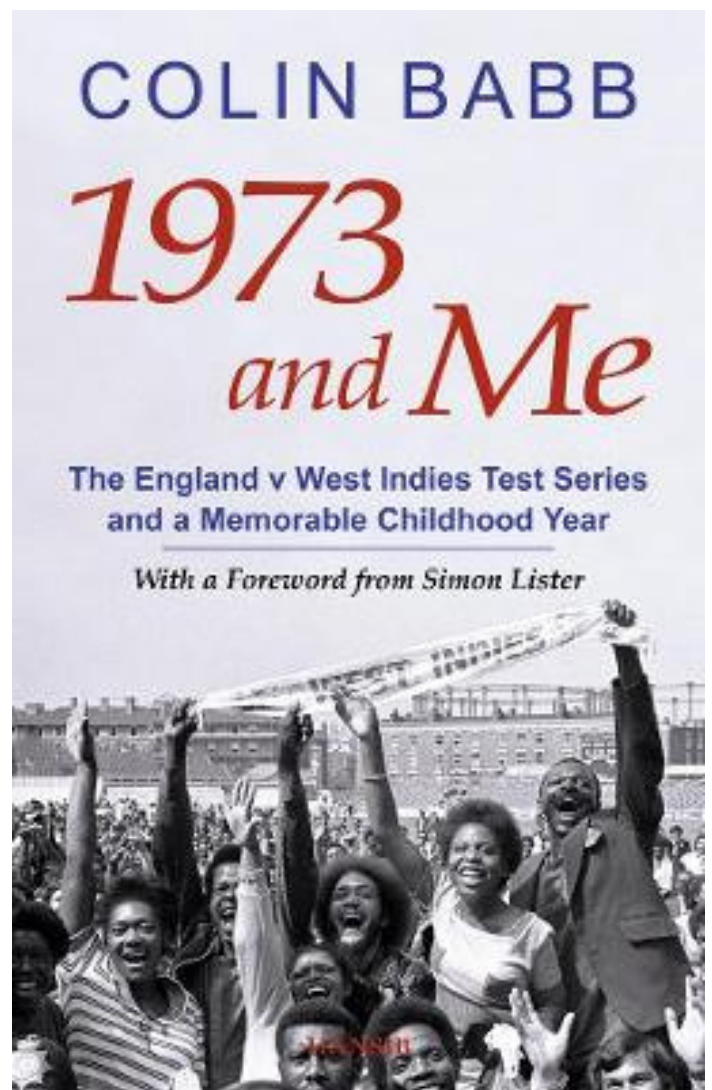
# 1973 AND ME: THE ENGLAND V WEST INDIES TEST MATCH AND A MEMORABLE CHILDHOOD YEAR

COLIN BABB (LONDON: HANSIB, 2020)

BY JAMES SERIEUX

I was pleasantly surprised by the 1973 and Me's more personal recollection of events preceding the three England v West Indies Tests that took place in 1973. For this momentous occasion, multiple chapters are dedicated to Collin Babb's conversion from a sole supporter of Leeds United Football club to engaging in cricket because of the 1973 Tests. These initial chapters focus on cricket and football's involvement in Babb's childhood environment and his interactions in an increasingly multi-racial London.

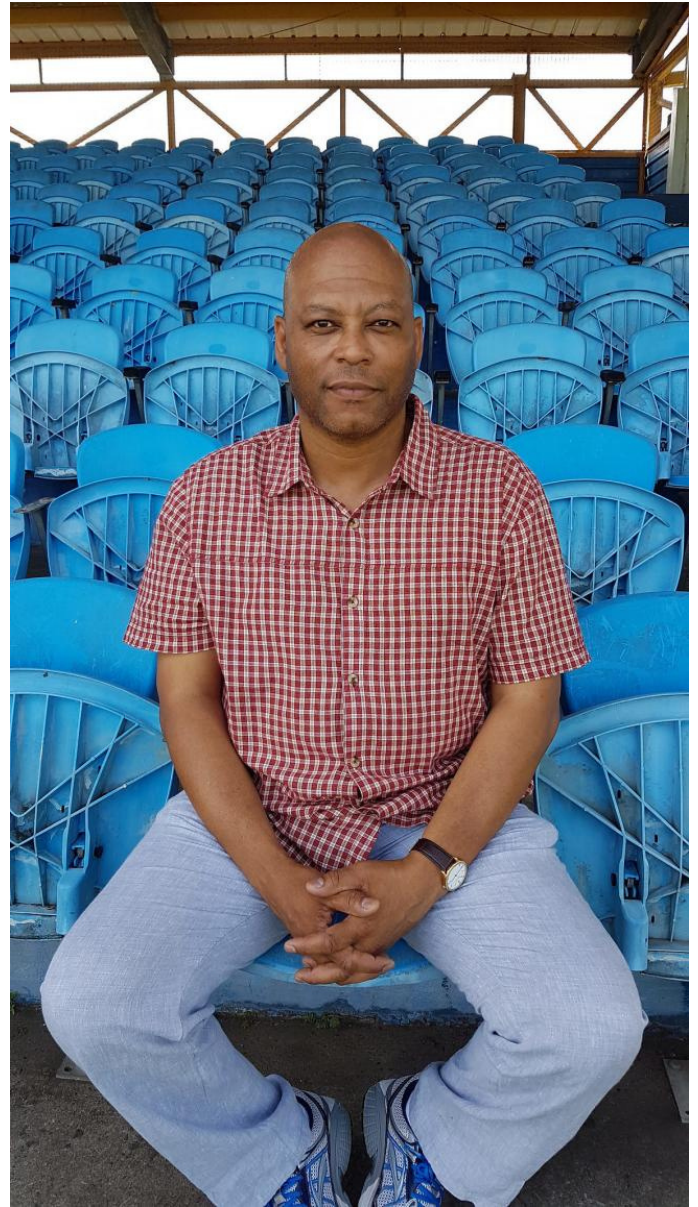
From this, I was pleasantly surprised by some of the parallels with my own childhood that I could gather from his account of his South London residence. This book then documents important influencers in Babb's love of football and cricket and concludes with an overview of the England v West Indies Tests that fuelled West Indian pride. In order to provide an adequate review of this book, I have



split its twelve main chapters into sections which will be discussed chronologically.

The earlier chapters (one to three) set the scene and build the momentum required for the finale, which consists of the three Tests. I thoroughly enjoyed Chapter one as I could connect with some of the modern references. I appreciated the inclusion of the programme *Black Nurses: The Women Who Saved the NHS*, as it helped exemplify the mass of Caribbean migrants to the UK and their jobs. Overall, chapter one comprised of Babb explaining the demographics of his area and the struggles he had with Caribbean-British identity.

This chapter balanced general context and personal insight into how this affected him and how his family were viewed. Chapter two focused on the development of cricket in the Caribbean, which justified why 1973 was considered so pivotal. Chapter three was similar, providing background to the development of West Indies cricket from 1900. Together, these chapters provide the reader with the sense that cricket was a source of pride in the West Indies. However, I did not experience the same interest in chapter three as I had with the first two chapters. This chapter did not focus on Babb's more personal experiences. Instead, most of the content relied on accounts gained from journalists and eyewitnesses to events not even close to 1973. Although it was



Colin Babb

laboriously documented, the primary connection to the 1973 Tests was through its ending exhibition of 1969's West Indies failure.

Nonetheless, with the advent of chapters four to six, the central overarching theme became football, but this was combined with discussion around the perception of race.

Through the club of Leeds United, Babb backtracks to 1965 and Albert Johanneson – the first black footballer to play in an FA cup final. These chapters placed a spotlight on the increasing presence of black sportspeople. Again, this did show the increasing pride that was developing amongst West Indians in sport. Nevertheless, these chapters felt redundant towards the books titular focus – the 1973 Tests and ‘a Memorable Childhood Year’.

Chapter four was an interesting read, but it was not focused on cricket. Instead, it once again highlighted another of Babb’s passions: football. Most of the information in this chapter converged around the 1970 FA cup final. Consistently, there were explanations for new people and clubs mentioned (such as Don Revie and Leeds United’s competition – Sunderland), and Babb discusses why Leeds United was his favourite club. There is a mixture of objective information mixed with the writer’s personal accounts. The description of Wembley pitch was significant in helping me imagine what it was like to be there. Illustrations such as the size of the open space and the state of the pitch created a sense of a crowded and worn location. I enjoyed reading this personal experience, but I cannot deny that I failed to see its link to the overarching cricket theme. However, the topic linked to 1973 itself, as there was an analysis of Leeds United by the end of 1973.

Chapters four and five were frustrating in general as they exhibited a potential issue for those interested in a linear lead up to the Tests. At times, the story would jump forward to 1973, 1974 or even 1988 for background knowledge and then return to the current topic at hand. This often caused me to re-read paragraphs in an attempt to follow the narrative. However, this did make the book very personal, similar to how an excited friend would scatter their thoughts when discussing meaningful events. It also may have been the best way to showcase additional information around how matches were viewed and programmes taking place alongside the leading football and cricket events.

This sentiment continues through to the end of Chapter 6. Flashbacks do provide context behind many of the events, but they seem spliced into the main story. What did interest me was the sources he used for this period: The 1973 John Player Cricket Yearbook and the 1973 Playfair Cricket Annual. These were excellent additions to the book, filling up gaps in Babb’s own memories of the events surrounding it.

Chapters 8-9 builds up to the first Test and the feeling of wanting to support a West Indian team that was representative of Babb. Within these chapters, the 1973 Women’s World Cup is mentioned. Since this fell within the 1973 year, it could have been expanded upon in more depth, although I understand that the focus is on Babb’s

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personal experiences with support from multiple accounts.

Within these chapters, the 1973 Women's World Cup is mentioned. Since this fell within the 1973 year, it could have been expanded upon in more depth, although I understand that the focus is on Babb's personal experiences with support from multiple accounts.

The three Tests are thankfully given their own sections, but they do not comprise most of the book. Chapters 10-12 give heavily descriptive recounts, covering each of the Tests. This included opinions from a myriad of cricketers as well as casual spectators. Since the author experienced these events mostly through television, the inclusion of a range of interviews from Deryck Murray, Frank Hayes and Dickie Bird help increase the excitement and drama surrounding West Indies victory. Therefore, if you wish to hear a personal, heavily researched account of Collin Babb's personal story surrounding cricket and football, then I can recommend this book. If you solely wish to focus on the 1973 Tests (or just 1973 in general), then be advised that this may not be the book.

James Serieux is a current undergraduate at University College London. When not focusing on his history degree, James usually works with businesses and services in Waltham Forest in North East London.

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